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THE NEW YORKER

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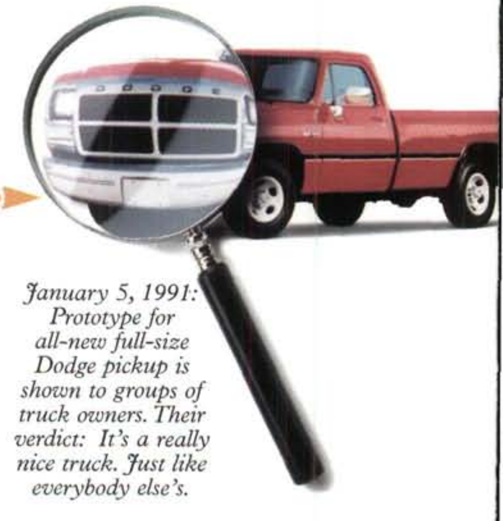
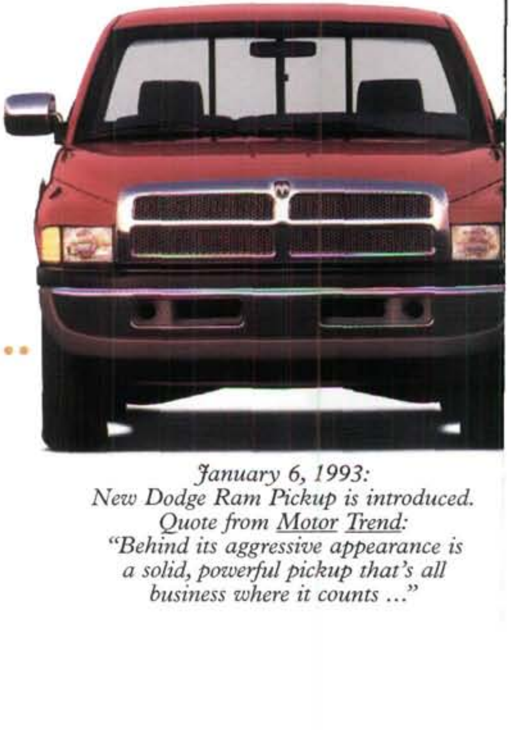


January 5, 1991: Prototype for all-new full-size Dodge pickup is shown to groups of truck owners. Their verdict: It's a really nice truck. Just like everybody else's.



January 6, 1993: New Dodge Ram Pickup is introduced. Quote from Motor Trend: "Behind its aggressive appearance is a solid, powerful pickup that's all business where it counts ..."

September 1, 1993: New Dodge Ram Pickup named Motor Trend's Truck of the Year. Not to be outdone, Texas Auto Writers Association dubs Ram "Truck of Texas."

*April 23, 1996: Strategic Vision confers its 1996 Total Quality Award™ for "Best Ownership Experience" for full-size pickups on Dodge Ram.**

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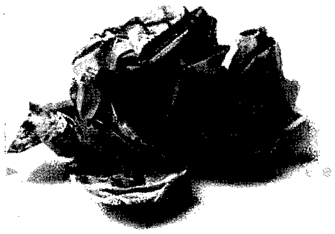
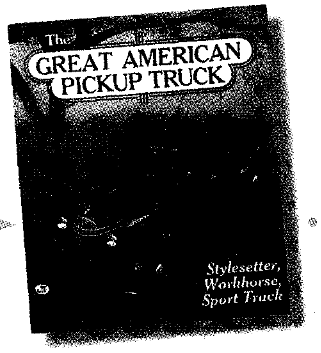
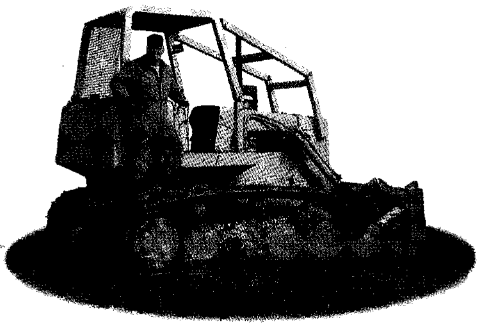


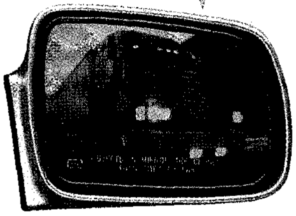
February 6, 1991:
With launch just 25 months away, design team starts over.



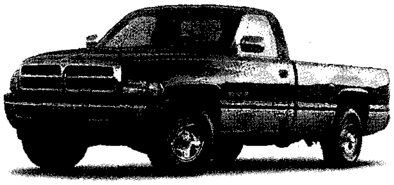
March 14, 1991:
Designer discovers a book on the history of American pickups. Meanwhile in the United Arab Emirates, Sheik Hamad Bin Hamdan Al-Nahyan is building a 60-foot replica of a 1942 Dodge Power Wagon.



April 20-24, 1991:
Design team visits construction site, observes how workers really use their trucks. Collision with 'dozer narrowly avoided.

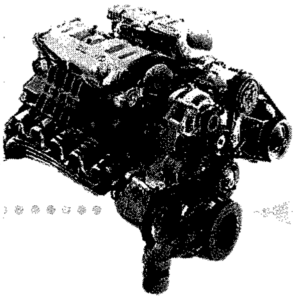


June 6, 1991:
Merging onto I-75 with 20-ton semi on their bumper, designers have instincts for revised design confirmed.



November 4, 1991:
Aggressive new truck design is shown to consumers. The verdict: They either love it or hate it. (Luckily, they mostly love it.) Chrysler honchos say, "Build it."

March 12, 1992:
Interior design team dons thick work gloves to test operation of knobs and switches in the cab under real-world conditions.



April 10, 1992:
Power train team adds Magnum V10, cast-iron cousin to the 400 hp Viper V10 and the most powerful engine ever in a pickup, as power plant option.

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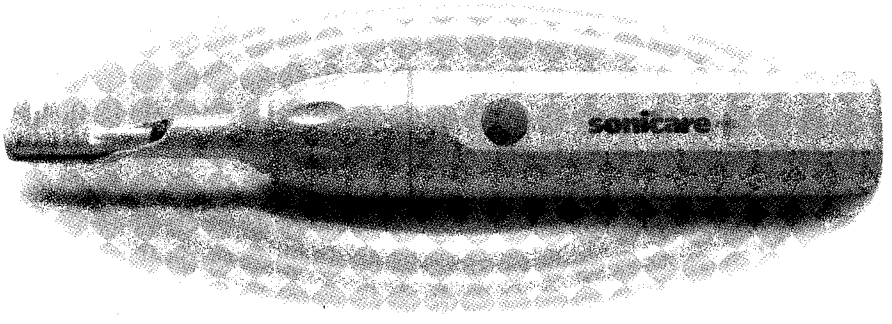

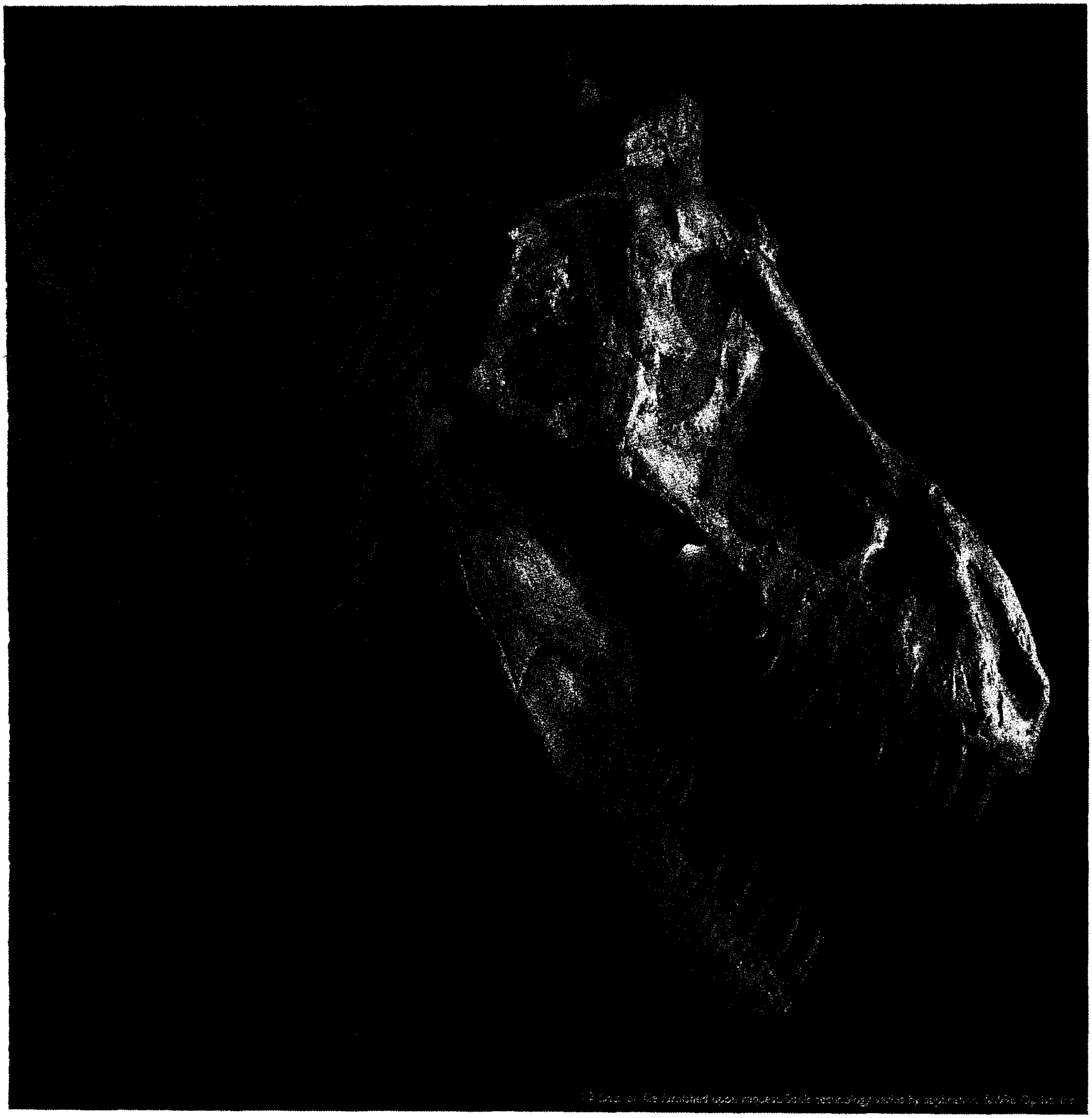

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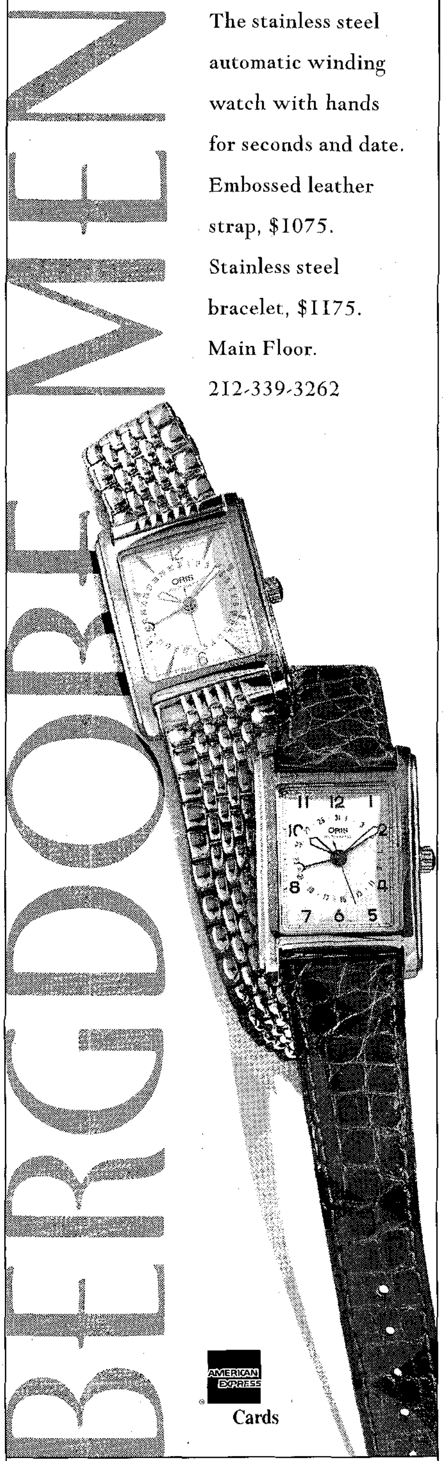

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COMMENT

HOCK TOOEY

A rhubarb that was more than a nasty little spat.

SHAKESPEARE'S characters are awash in expectorate—"If I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse," Falstaff cries; "Why dost thou spit at me?" the Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III, demands of his future wife; "If you had but look'd big, and spit at him, he'ld have run," advises Clown in "The Winter's Tale"—but it is Shylock who is the most famous of the insulted and the injured. We feel Shylock's humiliation ("You . . . spit upon my Jewish gabardine") whether his creator felt it or not. For there is no gesture more derisive than the propulsion of a great gob of saliva from a sneering mouth.

Umpires are accustomed to scorn, but seldom does the contumely to which they are routinely subjected reach Shylockian levels. Last week, however, as the baseball playoffs began, the executives of the American League dithered over what to do about Roberto Alomar, the brilliant second baseman of the Baltimore Orioles. In the final game of the regular season, Alomar had become aggrieved after an umpire named John Hirschbeck called a close third strike against him. The call, Thomas Boswell wrote in the Washington *Post*, "was bad, but hardly the worst in history." After an exchange of what are traditionally known as "words," Hirschbeck ejected Alomar from the game. At that point, Alomar stopped shouting at Hirschbeck just long enough to let fly—copiously, with shocking force and directly into the unfortunate umpire's empurpled face—from about a foot away. "He spit all over my face—in my eyes, everywhere," Hirschbeck said later.

If Alomar had not already alienated everyone with his manners, he surely did so when he wondered aloud to reporters after the game whether Hirschbeck hadn't lost his keenness on the diamond after his seven-year-old son died, three years ago, from adrenoleukodystrophy, a rare genetic disorder that ruins the brain and the nervous system. "I think after he got problems with his family," Alomar said, in what was apparently a misguided attempt to express some sort of sympathy, "after his son died—that's real tough in life for any person—he changed. He got real bitter." Hirschbeck's surviving son, who is nine, also suffers from the disease. When Alomar was asked whether he regretted his actions, he said, "What's to regret? I don't regret nothing I did. It's one in a million. He caught me in a bad moment."

Three days later, finally sensing the threat to his image and his fortune, Alomar apologized, and donated fifty thousand dollars to medical research—but not

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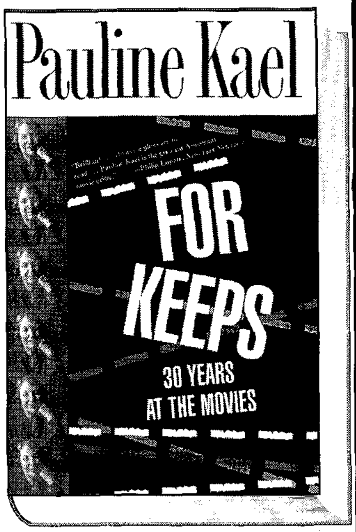

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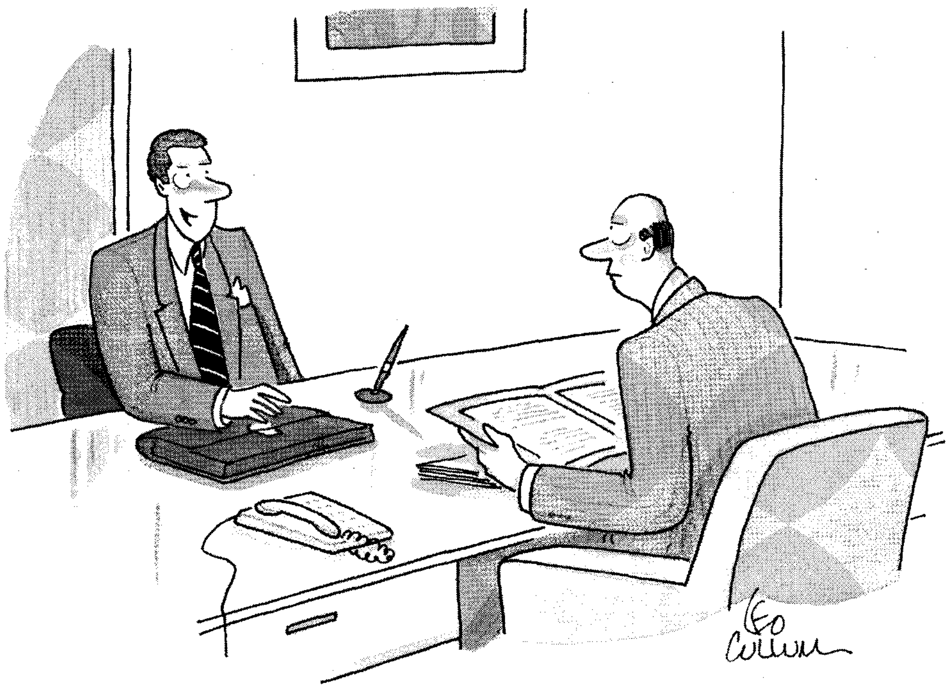


"I see myself in a position where mediocrity is rewarded."

• •

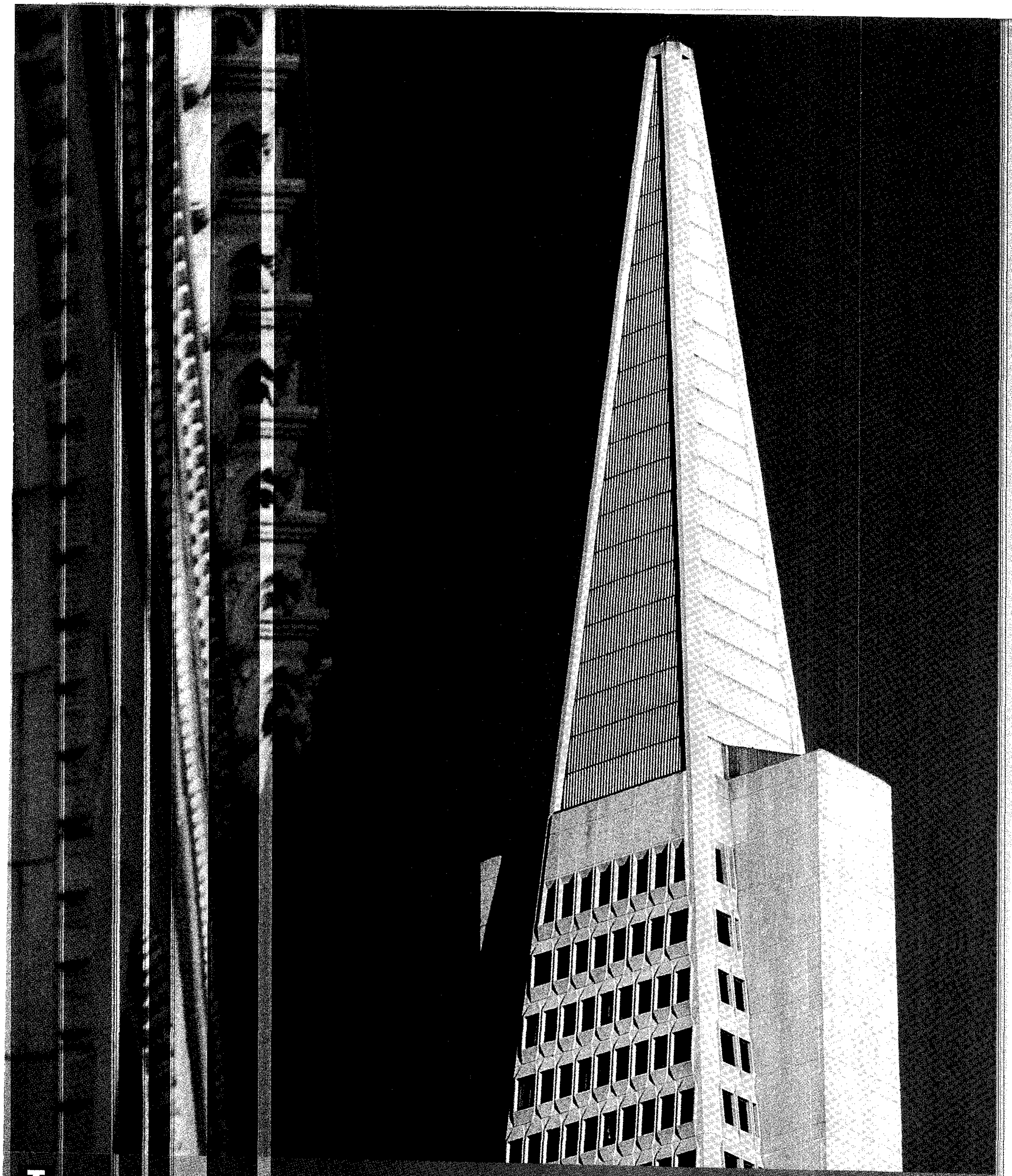
before he had succeeded in branding himself a boor. Baltimore will forever have mixed feelings about Roberto Alomar.

Spitting, of course, is not unknown to baseball, or to popular culture in general. The chewing of tobacco is a habit that many baseball players are still enslaved to, and the field is their cuspidor. The deadliest pitch in baseball is the spitball; the spitter was long ago banned, and we still remember its most notorious practitioner, Gaylord Perry, as cloaked in darkness, like a warlock. The great Ted Williams further dampened his already soggy relations with the supporters of the Boston Red Sox when, in a moment of pique, he turned toward the stands and spat. It was a generalized sort of expectoration, and the Kid blamed fatigue, but the damage was done. The Fenway fans admired the Splendid Splinter; but they could never quite love him, especially after that phlegmatic gesture of moist disdain. Part of Reggie Jackson's ferocity at the plate came from his ability to spit through his teeth toward the mound, not once but twice, serially—two liquid tracer bullets of Yankee imperialism. As for popular culture, rock stars seem fond of spitting onstage, among them Johnny Rotten, Patti Smith, and, most recently, Liam Gallagher, of the British pop sensation Oasis. When it comes to actors, Al Pacino is the sultan of spit: whether as Scarface or as Richard III, he showers the boards in precious bodily fluids. The comedienne Roseanne, in her ill-starred attempt to parody baseball, grabbed her crotch while singing "The Star Spangled Banner"—and spat.

Alomar's offense, even in its particulars, was not unprecedented. In 1939, at the Polo Grounds, Billy Jurges, the Giants' shortstop, spat in an umpire's face. (Besides a fine and a suspension, Jurges got a punch in the jaw, delivered personally by the ump.) But Alomar's outburst seems indicative of a newly unhinged quality in sports and in public behavior. Contemporary players did not invent the art of dispute or the thuggish gesture. Ty Cobb was famous for his abuse; the Yanks' Billy Martin had the worst case of short man's disease in baseball; Earl Weaver, of the Orioles, made an ass of himself every time he twisted the bill of his cap and kicked dirt all over an umpire's shoes—and that was rather often. But there is an obvious acceleration in expressed ill-temper—a change in degree—and it is a change now visible to even the youngest fan. New York and some other cities have been blessed recently with the advent of a new cable-television outlet, the Classic Sports Network. The network specializes in rebroadcasting old sporting events: there is a lot of filler junk—quiz shows, promotions for devices promising to harden the stomach—but more often one can watch the fights of Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, and Muhammad Ali, or memorable World Series games, or classic N.B.A. playoffs, or ancient Wimbledon finals. Until now, for anyone under thirty, these events have had the quality of legend; the network might as well be serving up videos of the Peloponnesian War.

Not long ago, the Classic Sports Network reran the event dearest to the heart of this city's basketball fans: the seventh, and decisive, game of the 1969-70 championship series between the Knicks and the Los Angeles Lakers. The beauty of the Knicks' victory is sublime, but only a sentimentalist would claim that the team of Willis Reed and Walt Frazier and Bill Bradley could beat the best of today, the Chicago Bulls of Michael Jordan. But what is most striking is the difference in civility on the court. The Knicks and the Lakers never seemed to charge the referee or scream (as Alomar did repeatedly) a word that the *Times* would probably call a maternal-bedroom epithet. In our era, it is almost unthinkable for a referee's questionable call to be accepted with good grace; nowhere is what Robert Hughes calls "the culture of complaint" more in evidence than on the courts and the playing fields. Players seem duty-bound to whine, to stamp their feet, to rain down curses on authority. And it gets worse. On the baseball diamond today, it is almost unthinkable for a hitter not to charge the mound, bat in hand, after suffering a pitch he adjudges to have come too close to his person.

Professional sports are a multibillion-dollar industry and a year-round American obsession. No one has any illusions that the players of yesteryear were angels or models of deportment—not Ruth, not Mantle, not Jim Brown—but on the whole, even in ferocious competition, a certain decorousness, even civility, prevailed in their public performances. Roberto Alomar and his fellows in uncountable riches and unbridled complaint might reflect upon the advice one performer gives another in "As You Like It"—to "clap into't roundly, without hawking or spitting." Is that so hard? —David Remnick



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TRIALS ON TRIAL

The O. J. Simpson verdict was the culmination of a recent history of jury nullification, which has become institutionalized through a number of notorious cases. Yet the legal system still honors this obvious folly, still permits trial by jury consultant—a new form of jury-tampering—and still presumes that a dozen different amateurs can understand the principle of reasonable doubt and reach a verdict without fear, favor, or racial prejudice. Jeffrey Toobin's article ("The Marcia Clark Verdict," September 9th) is conclusive evidence that the jury system must be abolished and replaced by a three-judge panel with unanimity required only in the case of a capital crime.

HALTON ADLER MANN
San Francisco, Calif.

If O. J. Simpson is a guilty man set free, his having been set free is part of the price paid for a legal system that presumes innocence and places the burden of proof on the prosecution. It is also part of the price paid for centuries of racial injustice. Like many others, I think Simpson is probably guilty, but I don't believe that the prosecution proved it. If Marcia Clark had beaten Johnnie Cochran by means of a craftier race strategy and a smoother dramatic performance, would justice and our legal system have been better served or a better precedent set for future trials?

JUDITH OLINICK
Middlebury, Vt.

DAWKINS VS. GOD

Ian Parker, in his piece on the British Darwinist Richard Dawkins (Annals of Science, September 9th), speaks of the "pure incontestable logic of Darwinian evolution," and of the "miserable logic" of identifying God as the reason for the existence of complex things in the universe. Yet Dawkins agonizes that it is "almost as if the human brain were specifically designed to misunderstand Darwinism." I agree that our brains were designed, but not that the designer couldn't have been supernatural. Why is it necessary to try to convince people that they were not made in the image of a God who loves them?

ANDY SAYLOR
Elizabethtown, Pa.

Science attacks complex, integrated mythologies with a unidimensional substitute: a methodology that is simply more accurate. In Mr. Dawkins's arena—evolution—science tells us that we are descended from apes, a fact that a small percentage of human beings actually care about. But science says nothing about whether our lives have meaning, or about whether the cosmos is ultimately benevolent or just. It says nothing about how to conduct one's life morally, how to be a productive member of a community—in monosyllables, how to feel good. These are things that most people do care about, and that nonscientific cognitive systems address. Scientists like Dawkins, who aggrandize the accomplishments of science without addressing its limitations, will continually be frustrated by their lack of success in imposing their way of thought on everyone else.

JONATHAN MARKS
Associate Professor of Anthropology
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

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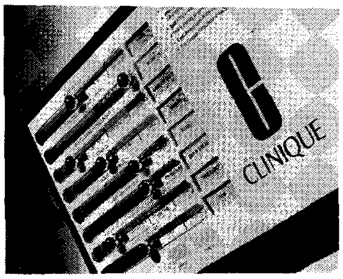

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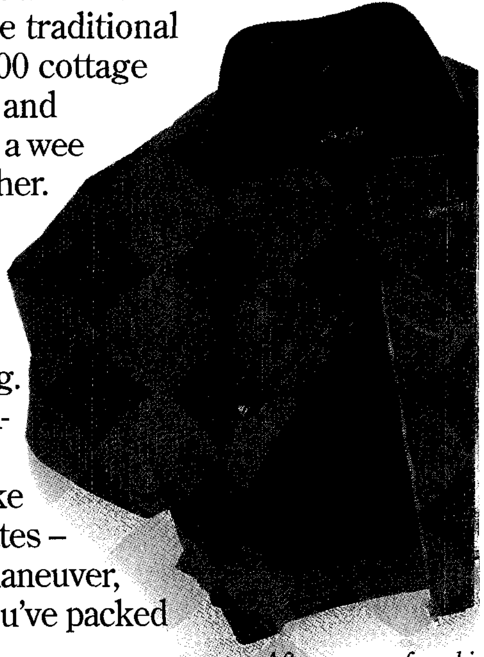

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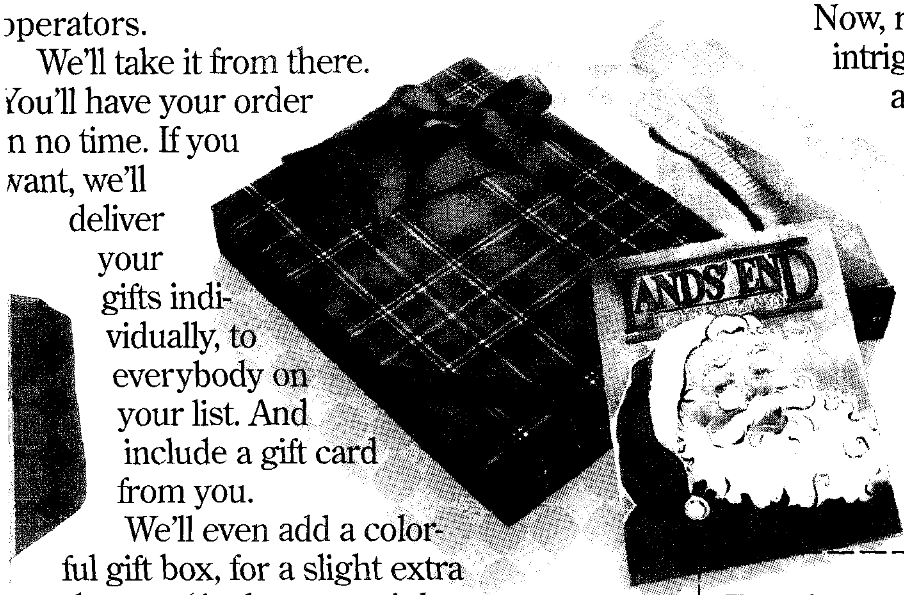

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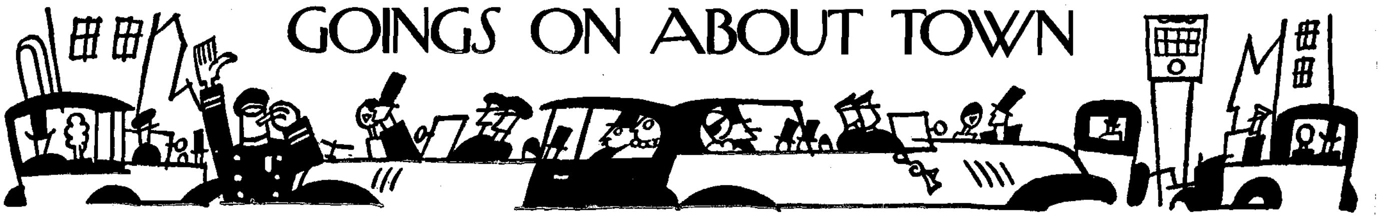

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Beatification of Area Boy—The Brooklyn Academy of Music presents a day-in-the-life drama set on a Lagos street corner, by the exiled Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka. Directed by Jude Kelly. Oct. 9 at 7, Oct. 10-12 at 8, and Oct. 13 at 3. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

The Blues Are Running—Michael Cristofer's new play, in which mistaken identity results in murder, revolves around the intertwined circumstances of three unacquainted couples. Previews begin Oct. 11. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Cakewalk—Linda Lavin has the lead opposite Michael Knight in Peter Feibleman's autobiographical drama about his relationship with Lillian Hellman. Directed by Marshall Mason, with music by Carly Simon. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Fit to Be Tied—A new comedy by Nicky Silver, starring T. Scott Cunningham, Jean Smart, Matt Keeslar, and Dick Latessa. In previews through Oct. 13. Opens Oct. 15 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Gerard Alessandrini cuts a satirical swath through the Great White Way in a new edition of his musical parody. In previews. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

431 of My Closest Friends—A woman's plans for her son's briss get waylaid in this comedy by Miriam Kouzel Billington, Peter Goldman, and David Presby, starring Ms. Billington as the woman and Mr. Presby as everyone else. A Jewish Repertory Theatre production. Previews begin Oct. 12. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

The Importance of Being Earnest—Melissa Errico, Nancy Marchand, and Eric Stoltz lead the cast in the Irish Repertory Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's 1895 comedy. Previews begin Oct. 11. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Missing/Kissing—A double bill of new comedies written and directed by John Patrick Shanley: "Missing Marisa," about two men who've been jilted by the same woman, and "Kissing Christine," about a first date. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Sex and Longing—In Christopher Durang's new comedy, Sigourney Weaver and Jay Goede play friends who write a book about their respective sexual addictions, which comes under attack by right-wingers. A Lincoln Center Theatre production, directed by Garland Wright. Two previews on Oct. 9. Opens Oct. 10 at 6:15. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Six Characters in Search of an Author—Jean Cocteau Repertory's staging of Pirandello's 1921 play will run in rotating repertory with Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw." Previews Oct. 11-12. Opens Oct. 13 at 3. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

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Taking Sides—Ronald Harwood's drama stars Ed Harris as an American military investigator and Daniel Massey as the German conductor Wilhelm Fürtwangler, who was accused of collaborating with the Nazis. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Vagina Monologues—Eve Ensler performs her new one-woman show about, well . . . In previews. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

The British comic Eddie Izzard, at P.S. 122.

ULRIKE SCHAMONI

OPENED RECENTLY

Americana—A revue surveying the evolution of the nation's music since the eighteen-nineties. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Big—This adaptation of the movie that starred Tom Hanks provides little joy, though Daniel Jenkins, as the twelve-year-old in a grownup's body, is sweet and likable. Directed by Mike Ockrent. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/27/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Oct. 13.)

Born to Sing!—This sequel to the long-running gospel musical "Mama, I Want to Sing!" has a negligible plot and some second-rate acting, but the point is the music, and the music is glorious. You couldn't find a better introduction to gospel without going to church. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

The Boys in the Band—Mart Crowley's 1968 study of gay self-hatred no longer seems particularly shocking (except in its viciousness) or politically suspect, but it holds up soundly in this impressive revival, which was supervised by the playwright and directed with buckets of bile by Kenneth Elliott. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Cage #2: Nocturnal Architecture—The audience is part of the performance in this piece by the Japanese experimental theatre troupe OM_2, who place spectators in mobile cages onstage. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Closes Oct. 13.)

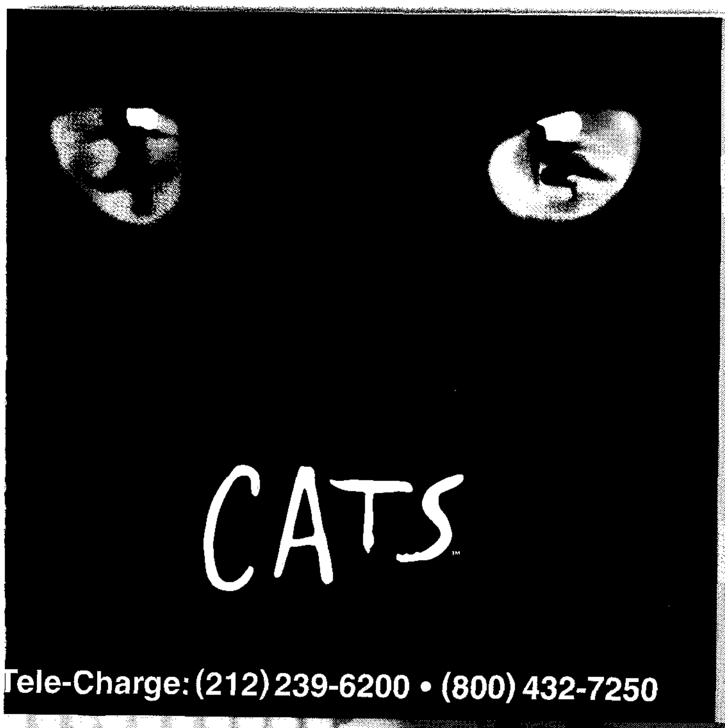
Chimère—In the center of two concentric red dirt paths lies a pond, in which candles seem to float; the lights dim, someone sings, and suddenly a man on horseback appears in the pond. And for the next two hours, the French company Zingaro—seventeen riders, acrobats, and dancers, a twelve-member band, and twenty-seven horses—overwhelms its audience with passionate, sensual images. This is art for art's sake, without any particular plot, but the equestrianism is astonishing (a horse at full gallop, for instance, with a rider balanced upside down near one shoulder), and in combination with the richly colored, Indian-inspired music, dance, and costumes, it's exquisite. (The big top at Battery Park City. For more information, call 718-636-4100.)

The Cocoanuts—The American Jewish Theatre's revival of the Irving Berlin–George S. Kaufman musical that starred the Marx Brothers in 1925, about a Florida land scheme. The songs, which include "Always" and "Shaking the Blues Away," are pleasant enough, but it's the laugh-out-loud comedy that really scores. Frank Ferrante has replaced Michael McGrath, in the Groucho role. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Disappearing Act—A cabaret-style revue meant to celebrate and skewer urban gay life. Michael Oster's songs, which run the gay gamut—shopping, phone sex, theatre queens, people with AIDS—are impersonal if sometimes clever audience pleasers, and while the three performers work hard to make them come alive, the brittle staging and two-hour running time do them in. For piano-bar fans only. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Eddie Izzard—The English actor and comic, who looks like a blond Tony Curtis (the red lipstick completes the look), is making his American début with a one-man show that is sweetly surreal and refreshingly unautobiographical. The subjects run, in winningly ragged fashion ("I don't do links," Izzard says), to the funnier aspects of hair nets, oranges, and language tapes. Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30, through Oct. 20. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Edmond—Enervated by family life, Edmond leaves home to discover overnight that the world outside is a sleazy pit of violence. The bare-bones plot of David Mamet's 1982 play receives a punchy, almost filmlike treatment in director Clark Gregg's production: the short, snappy scenes fly by rapidly, leaving the impression that the action has been edited down to its primitive roots. As the self-defeating Edmond, so desperate to learn how the world works that he becomes a target for every street-wise con man, David Rasche is just about perfect. There's a comic knowingness to Mamet,



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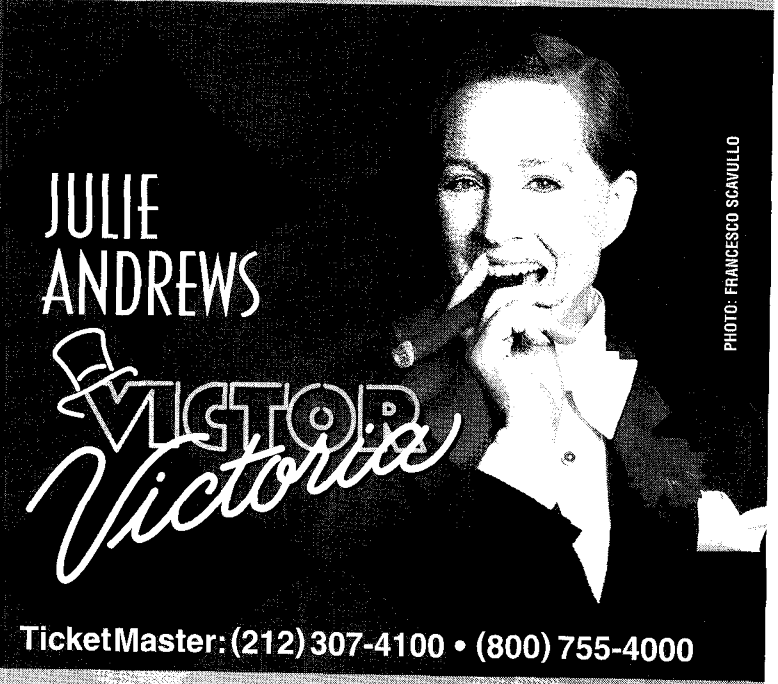

JULIE ANDREWS

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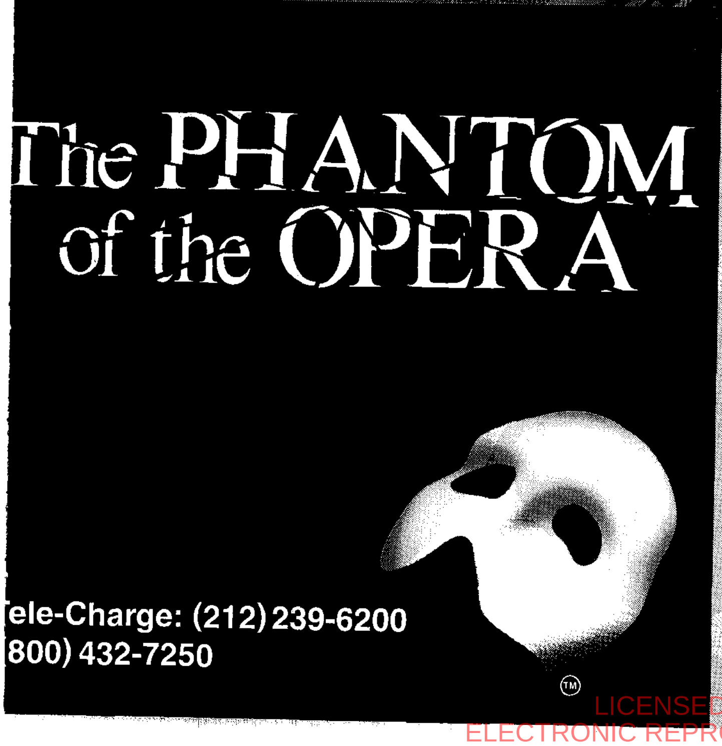

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and while this play doesn't hit with the raw power of his later works, it does show off his razor-sharp gift for finding the terrible joke in tense situations. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Einstein: A Stage Portrait—John Crowther portrays the fluffy-haired physicist, in a new play by Willard Simms. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-6322.)

Evolution—A rock performance piece, set in a carnival, by Steven Guyer. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510.)

Full Gallop—The legendary, vividly eccentric fashion editor Diana Vreeland is the subject of Mary Louise Wilson and Mark Hampton's one-woman play, in which Wilson stars. Set in 1971, shortly after Vreeland was fired from *Vogue*, it's rich and resonant, with much to say about life that's worth hearing. A thoroughly satisfying evening in the theatre—very funny and very moving. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—Burt Shevelove, Larry Gelbart, and Stephen Sondheim's 1962 musical-comedy version of a Roman farce is a joke play that begs for outrageousness. But Jerry Zaks's peppy, acrylic revival, starring Nathan Lane, seldom enters that giddy zone of comic daring. (5/20/96) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Grace & Glorie—Tom Ziegler's predictable but charmingly told tale of an illiterate Virginia mountain woman (Estelle Parsons) and the Harvard M.B.A. (Lucie Arnaz) who befriends her in her last days. Under Gloria Muzio's direction, the two actresses make the blend of humor and pathos affecting rather than—as it might easily have been—cloying. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

The Heather Woodbury Report, or, What Ever—The performance artist presents her one-woman, hundred-odd-character serial comedy in four two-episode evenings. The four-week cycle runs Wednesdays, through Oct. 23; it begins again on Oct. 30. (Surf Reality, 172 Allen St., between Stanton and Rivington Sts. 673-4182.)

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—The exuberant designer Howard Crabtree died in June, and this revue of witty, satiric songs (created with and written and directed by Mark Waldrop, and sung by a talented cast dressed in Crabtree's sequinned, feathered, mind-boggling costumes) is a fitting cap to his career. The songs purport to be parts of a larger show that keeps falling apart, leaving Howard (played by Michael West) wondering whether he should have become a chicken farmer. Clearly, chicken farming's loss was our gain. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Hughie—Al Pacino stars as the blowhard gambler Erie Smith, in his own staging of Eugene O'Neill's 1941 drama. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

An Ideal Husband—In Oscar Wilde's hundred-and-one-year-old play, a youthful transgression comes back to threaten the career of a promising Cabinet member. The man who saves the day is played, with showy aplomb, by Martin Shaw. The rest of the delightful, mostly British cast, under the direction of Peter Hall, is well up to the Wildean wit and wisdom, and the evening flies by in a flash of epigrammatic splendor. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—In made-for-musical-theatre voices, the appealing cast of Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts's crowd-pleasing revue about love and marriage sings songs examining made-for-musical-theatre issues. Couples in the audience may nudge each other happily as they guess the actors' lines before they're uttered. Directed by Joel Bishoff. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic on Broadway—The sleight-of-hand artist and illusionist, Off Broadway, actually. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The King and I—In a word, magnificent. Hats off to Donna Murphy, as Anna, Lou Diamond Phillips, as the King of Siam, and everyone else (including Rodgers and Hammerstein, of course) who had a hand in this production. Christopher Renshaw directed. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Lady Strass—Cuban-born playwright Eduardo Manet's 1977 play, set in Belize, about an English recluse who holds two men hostage in her house and forces them to help her reënact her past. (Ubu Repertory Theatre, 15 West 28th St. 679-7562. Closes Oct. 20.)

Late Night Catechism—An interactive comedy by Maripat Donovan and Vicki Quade. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-4200.)

Matty: An Evening with Christy Mathewson—Christy Mathewson's mother wanted him to be a preacher, but Mathewson preferred baseball, and between 1911 and 1913 he led the New York Giants to three pennant victories, becoming something like the Michael Jordan of his day. He also did quite a bit of writing, which Eddie Frierson has turned into a one-man show. Frierson exhibits plenty of energy (there's no shortage of yelling) in relating tales of such characters as manager John McGraw and Charley (Giant Jinx Killer) Faust. Unfortunately, he never fails to include the moral of a story. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Misalliance—The Pearl Theatre Company opens its season with Shaw's 1910 satire. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Oct. 12.)

Old Wicked Songs—Jon Marans' well-written piece of sentimental sanctimony asks the question: Can a blocked, arrogant twenty-five-year-old pianist find wisdom under the tutelage of a suicidal singing teacher who survived the Holocaust? (The answer is yes.) The characters go through their changes neatly, but the audience arrives at the station long before the engine of the plot does. (9/16/96) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Pig—A working-class family's barbecue turns bad, in a drama by Tammy Ryan. (29th Street Repertory Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575. Closes Oct. 12.)

Political Animal—*Douglas McGrath portrays* a charming but unprincipled Presidential candidate in his new comedy. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Radio Gals—A congenial tribute to the all-girl bands of the twenties and to the excitement that the new technology of broadcasting generated. Carole Cook plays Hazel C. Hunt, a small-town Arkansas music teacher who starts a radio station in her living room, with a sort of shrewd, enthusiastic dottiness. Hazel surrounds herself with a versatile group of female singers and musicians (two of whom, for no apparent reason, are played by men); then an inspector from the Commerce Department arrives to take away their license. Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's substance-free musical is so good-natured that the outcome is never really in doubt, but the songs—a combination of novelty, Tin Pan Alley-style, and jagged "modernist" numbers—are mostly wonderful and often very funny, too. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Rhinoceros—An adaptation by Theresa Rebeck of Ionesco's 1959 absurdist classic, presented by the Valiant Theatre Company. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Oct. 20.)

Skylight—The playwright David Hare's success and his social conscience are still at odds. This time, the inimitable Michael Gambon plays a successful entrepreneur, and the powerful, appealing Lia Williams is his beloved former mistress, who has given up the lush life to teach the underprivileged. Their differences are factored out as systematically as an algebraic equation. Like John Gunter's set—a well-appointed ramshackle flat in the fashionable but dowdy area of Northwest London—the play seems caught between naturalism and symbolism. (9/30/96) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

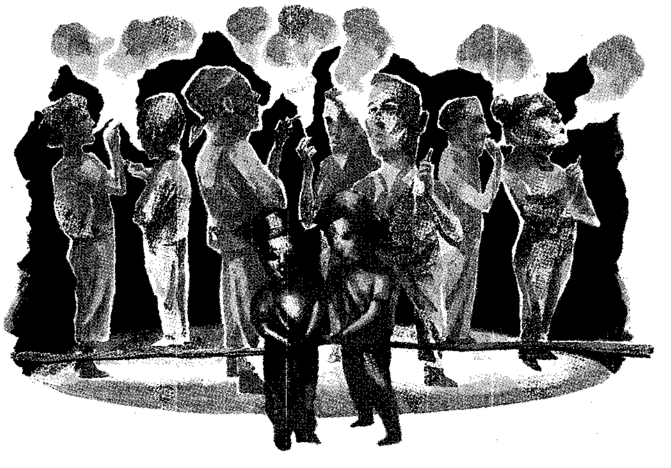
Summer and Smoke—The Roundabout has given Tennessee Williams's 1948 drama, about the unrequited love of the prim, pure Alma Winemiller (Mary McDonnell) for the louche doctor John Buchanan (Harry Hamlin), an uneven but compelling revival. Hamlin and McDonnell have a tender, appealing rapport, but director David Warren seems to have mounted the play without really understanding it. (9/16/96) (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Two Bourgeois Blacks—A comedy about an unfaithful couple, by Clifford Mason, who co-stars with Perri Gaffney. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400.)

View of the Dome—Theresa Rebeck's new play, set in our nation's capital, is about how very, very dirty the game of politics is. It's a comedy without a sense of humor, written with a heavy hand and infected with free-floating self-righteousness. Michael Mayer directed the sleek-looking yet draggy production. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **COWGIRLS:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . ***LOVE THY NEIGHBOR:*** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.



Meredith Monk's "The Politics of Quiet," at BAM.

TIM BOWER

DANCE

"The Politics of Quiet"—In designing this ninety-minute work, the composer and choreographer Meredith Monk saw herself as a "vocal archeologist." What she has unearthed is a sort of Gregorian scat singing: in rich bell tones and celestial harmonies, the ten singer-dancers in her troupe chant nonsense syllables ("br-r-r-ritiko," "pooka-laka-taeko," "yunn-mnyah-ah-

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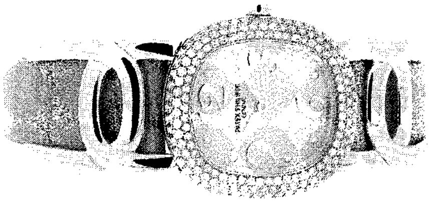


ah") while enacting spare, elusive rituals on a stage bathed in pure blue, white, or amber light. Though the formal tableaux of the staging are meant to evoke an oratorio, the fluidity of the singing recalls the limber inventions of dancers trained in contact improvisation, and the work (which is not so quiet or, in fact, all that political) comes most alive whenever the singers move—milling and smoking like nervous spouses; joining hands like children in a playground; dancing in an antic, if somewhat stark, single file. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 10 at 7, Oct. 11-12 at 8, and Oct. 13 at 3.)

Les Ballets de Monte Carlo—The company that, in an earlier incarnation, took a chance on the young ballet master George Balanchine returns to City Center with fifty dancers and two programs, each offering a Balanchine masterpiece and a recent work by the company's current choreographer, Jean-Christophe Maillot. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Oct. 8 at 7:30, Oct. 9-11 at 8, Oct. 12 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 13 at 3.)

"Riverdance"—This Dublin-based ensemble makes a case for percussive dance as a sort of high-impact Esperanto: over the course of two hours, the thirty dancers trade beats with a duo of tappers, a flamenco soloist, and a folk-dance company from Moscow. Still, the program's meat and potatoes are unmistakably Irish: fiddle music and Uilleann pipes, jig kicks and polished clogs, and line after thunderous line of (mostly) redheads. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Through Oct. 20.)

Jennifer Muller/The Works—The ten-member troupe appears in two premières, "Fruit" and "A Broken Wing," and in a selection of the choreographer's works from the last twenty years, including "Predicaments for Five" (1977), about stage calamities, and the athletic "Speeds" (1974). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 8 at 7:30, Oct. 9-11 at 8, Oct. 12 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 13 at 2 and 7:30.)

Ballet Metropolitano de Caracas—The Venezuelan company blends Russian technique (ballet master Vladimir Lopoukhov is the son of the Kirov's founder, Fyodor Lopoukhov) with homegrown attitude, in a program of standards from the Northern Hemisphere (a selection from Petipa's "Le Corsaire," a Ukrainian gopak, or jumping dance) and the Southern (a straightforward work by company founder Kayla Ermecheo, "The Way We Dance," emphasizing hips, high shoulders, and big red dresses). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Oct. 11 at 7:30 and Oct. 12 at 8.)

"Negotiations"—A program of five works drawing on Yiddish, Yemenite Jewish, and Egyptian culture. In the title piece, Ze'eva Cohen and Aleta Hayes explore the fraught relationship between the Jewish matriarch Sarah and her Egyptian slave Hagar, the mistress of Sarah's husband, Abraham. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 13 at 3.)

"I . . . Sit"—The soloist Min Tanaka, who gained fame in his native Japan as the "naked dancer" (these days he covers himself with a sock), presents his latest Butoh work, which, in paradoxical Zen fashion, has very little sitting. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 15 at 11 P.M.)

Instrumental rock with Lazy Boy, at Brownies.

DIETWAAP

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Fred Hersch—The jazz pianist. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 9 at 8.)

Jaguares—Known for the past eight years as Caifenes (the name was changed for legal reasons), Mexico's most popular rock band makes a rare appearance in New York. Jaguares' *rock en español* (or *rocanrol*) is not world music—indigenous music exported for global consumption—but rather Western pop sharply refracted through a Mexican sensibility. The band's sound isn't all that different from your average alternative-rock group's, but the vocals, by Saul Hernandez—a massive star in Mexico who looks something like a Latin Eddie Vedder—explore issues of Mexican identity and iconography. The band has an excellent new record, "El Equilibrio de los Jaguares," produced by Don Was. (Roxy, 515 W. 18th St. 307-7171. Oct. 10 at 8.)

Abida Parveen—The Pakistani devotional singer. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 12 at 8.)

Seventh Annual Mabel Mercer Caberet Convention—A week's worth of song at Town Hall. Oct. 14 at 8: Opening night, with Karen Akers, Barbara Carroll, Mary Cleere Haran, and Weslia Whitfield. Oct. 15 at 6: A program of music from films, hosted by Maureen McGovern.

Santana—Back in 1969, they called themselves the Santana Blues Band, and Carlos Santana's assimilationist blend of bluesy guitar backed by salsa rhythms gave a world beat to post-Hendrix rock. Although the group's recent studio albums have been power-chord retreads—Carlos Santana's solo records are always more adventurous—their live shows are impassioned affairs. The first show of a three-night engagement. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 15 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Paula West sings in the Oak Room through Oct. 12. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 13: **RAY BROWN** celebrates his seventieth birthday. Simply put, Brown is the world's greatest jazz bassist. His tone is as thick as molasses, his timing as natural as the rhythm of waves; the swing of his lines could move mountains. His melody-obsessed solos are a joy, overflowing with sturdy blues phrases and lilting passages. He's the man to beat—and no one has come close yet. **NANCY WILSON** has the stage starting Oct. 15. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through Oct. 12, the great **BARBARA COOK**. On Oct. 15, the indefatigable **BOBBY SHORT** begins his annual slow crawl to New Year's Eve. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, pianist **PETER MINTUN** finishes up a long engagement on Oct. 12.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through Oct. 13: **ABBEY LINCOLN**. Celebrating the joys of a midlife resurgence, she of the gutsy survivor spirit and the indeterminate pitch struts a stage with such force it's as if she never intends to get off. Starting Oct. 15: the **BENNY CARTER** quartet. Carter is just plain scary. At eighty-eight, he's still in fighting shape, and his alto sax ripples with the precision and grace that have been his signature for seven decades. There's not a shred of sentimentality in his presentation; his sound is made up of a lifetime's worth of knowledge and taste. Mondays belong to **LES PAUL**. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. Oct. 9-12: Piano and bass with **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE**.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. To hear **JOE WILLIAMS** (through late October) in an intimate venue is to experience jazz transcendence: he can moan the blues like Big Joe Turner's half brother or inhabit a sophisticated ballad as if coached by Cole Porter himself. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and the Bourbon Street Swingers, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. Oct. 11-12: The **OMER AVITAL** group. A bassist with a resonant fingers-in-the-wood tone and a rhythmic spin that brings to mind the great Wilbur Ware, Avital gathers around him some of the brightest of the new-jazz mavericks who call Smalls home. The rough-and-tumble ride that he and his drummer, Ali Jackson, give us resembles the rolling thunder of the No. 1 train heading down Seventh Avenue South.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The Chestnut Room may resemble a hunting lodge decorated by Liberace, but the performances here are no joke. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**RAY DRUMMOND,** New York's most reliable bassist, is in through Oct. 13. When you lay down the kind of shag carpet that he regularly does, anything on top sounds good. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music.

ROCK, ETC.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 9: **NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE.** Back in the early seventies, these Grateful Dead protégés probably launched a million joints with their album "The Adventures of Panama Red." The smoke-ringed posse is still led by John (Marmaduke) Dawson and once again includes guitarist David Nelson and pedal-steel-guitarist Buddy Cage. With the Del McCoury band.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Oct. 11: **LAZY BOY.** This New York trio makes guitar-driven, noirish instrumental music that recalls the work of Chris Isaak (minus the vocals, of course) and of Angelo Badalamenti (particularly for David Lynch's creepy movie "Wild at Heart"). The guitar drips with secret-agent echo, the bass murmurs and pleads like a broken heart, and the snare drum cracks with Spartan authority—an evocative soundtrack for your own private movie. With **CONGO NORVELL.**

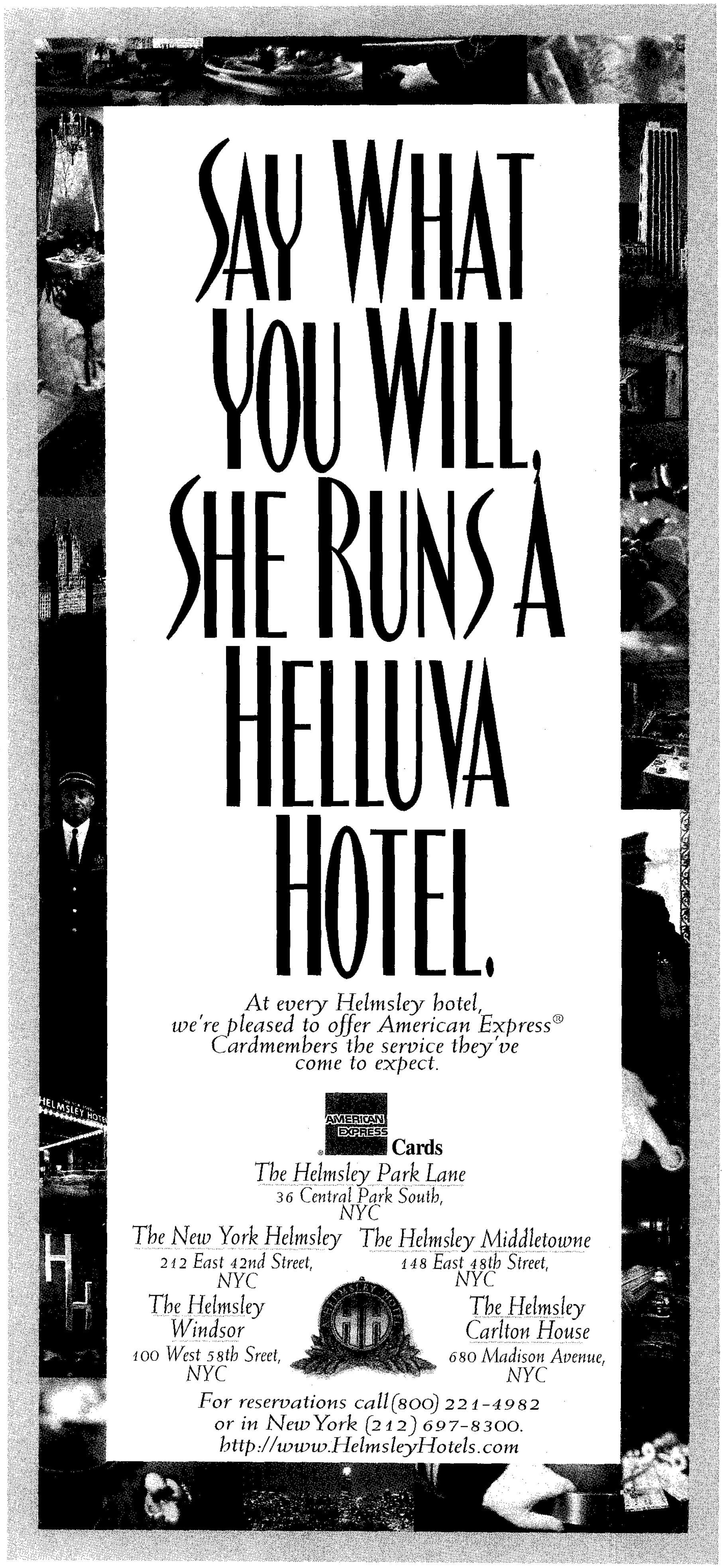
CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Oct. 11-12: **ROOMFUL OF BLUES.**

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district. The **SUN RA ARKESTRA,** featuring Charles Davis, plays every Wednesday.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Oct. 11: **PROFESSOR AND MARYANN.** Like their "Gilligan's Island" namesakes, this precocious Staten Island duo balances the cerebral (courtesy of guitarist-songwriter Ken Rockwell) with dark good looks (from helium-throated singer Danielle Brancaccio). The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

THE GREATEST BAR ON EARTH, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city. Oct. 10: The **FLYING NEUTRINOS.**

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 10-11: **LOS LOBOS.** It's discouraging to consider that, simply because they did the music for the movie "La Bamba," these East L.A. musicians have been unable to shake the Latino-rock albatross that's been hung around their necks by people who couldn't tell the difference between Ritchie Valens and Chris Montez. No wonder they've taken shelter lately in unpredictable projects like a children's album, "Papa's Dream," and an experimental spinoff group, the Latin Playboys. Their most recent disk, "Colossal Head," isn't as moving as their 1992 "Kiko," but it still manages to blend West Coast funk, New Orleans R. & B., Chicago blues, and norteño folk into a pungent pancultural stew. With the organ-driven jazz of **MEDESKI, MARTIN AND WOOD.** Oct. 14: **MIDNIGHT OIL.** Some people wanna fill the world with silly love songs, but Midnight Oil would rather sing about the exploitation of Aboriginal Australians. Led by the huge, bald, and glowering Peter Garret, the band offers four-minute discourses that you can bang your head to. Their political intensity seems particularly relevant given the popularity of radical bands like Rage Against the Machine, and they have a strong enough back catalog to make a live set seem like a greatest-hits package. Oct. 15: **RICHARD THOMPSON,** a sure thing since his early days with Fairport Convention, begins a two-night stand. His current record, "You?Me?Us?," is



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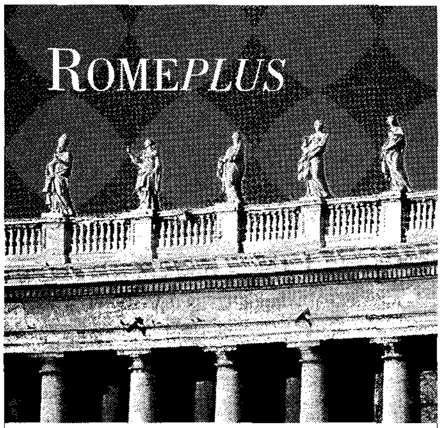

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the work of a veteran minstrel in top form—it combines witty jigs with ruefully passionate ballads and a generous share of knotty guitar work. Anyone who has seen Thompson live knows that his bone-dry between-song banter is well worth the price of admission.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 11-12: The **SKATALITES.** Oct. 15-16: **JONATHAN RICHMAN.** For twenty years, this puppy dog of a singer has been eliciting the same response: you want to pat him on the head—and then slap him upside it. In 1971, playing garage-rock anthems like "Roadrunner" and "I'm Straight" with his band, the Modern Lovers, he was a bona-fide proto-punk contender. By 1977 he'd gone acoustic and was warbling such out-of-the-sandbox inanities as "Ice Cream Man" and "I'm a Little Dinosaur." People thought he was kidding; he wasn't, and he's remained the same developmentally arrested, mushy schnook ever since.

Jaguares, at the Roxy.

ADAM MC CAULEY

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-4064)—With its emphatically romantic, melodic pop songs for innocents in clunky glasses and baby-doll dresses, the Washington, D.C.-based indie rock of **VELOCITY GIRL** (Oct. 12) has long been a fine antidote to Beltway cynicism. Given this sunniness, it's not surprising that the band's imminent breakup—this will be one of the group's final local performances—has to do not with the squabbles and addictions that plague most bands but with the coming marriage of sylphlike singer Sarah Shannon. The group's valedictory album, "Gilded Stars and Zealous Hearts," does more than allude to the slogan of Lucky Charms; its soaring harmonies and layered, blurry guitar work are as marshmallow-sweet and crunchy as the cereal itself.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Oct. 9: **DAVE ALVIN.** "Interstate City," the latest album by the former heart and soul of L.A.'s early-eighties roots-rock pioneers, the Blasters, mixes revved-up rockabilly, gut-bucket blues, and narrative folk. Like everything else he's recorded, it's very American—and very good. With **DAN ZANES,** formerly of the Del Fuegos. Oct. 11: **VELOCITY GIRL** (see Maxwell's).

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—Irish rockers **BLACK 47** usually play on Saturdays.

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Oct. 9: **FLORA PURIM** and **AIRTO MOREIRA.** Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Oct. 15: **GRAHAM PARKER.** Over the past twenty years, this acerbic graduate of England's pub-rock scene has released albums for five different record companies—and left all of them in a snit. Last year, he made an impressive indie début on little Razor & Tie Records with "Twelve Haunted Episodes," which found the still angry not-so-young man capable of squeezing out a few more sparks.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Oct. 12: **OMINOUS SEAPODS** and **IN-A-SENSE.** Oct. 14: The **LAST POETS.**

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Queen Nefertiti and the Royal Women" presents narrative reliefs and sculptures from Egypt's Amarna period (1353-1336 B.C.). A complementary reinstallation of sculptures, reliefs, and other objects is on view in the Amarna Galleries. . . . ¶ "Eugène Cuvelier, Photographer in the Circle of Corot," an exhibit of salted-paper prints from the eighteen-fifties and -sixties: streets and farmyards in the town of Barbizon, and exquisite, atmospheric views of the nearby Fontainebleau Forest. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ A cow-shaped *nekpokpo*, or slit drum, from Zaire, a twenty-one-string Senegalese *kora* (harp-lute), and a *mokenge* (bell) from Gabon are a few of the eighty objects in "Enduring Rhythms: African Musical Instruments and the Americas." . . ¶ A fine selection of Islamic textiles, including a Turkish embroidered hanging, a Kashmiri sash, and an ikat robe from Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Two by Two," in the Costume Institute, presents fifty fashion ensembles in male and female pairs, from the early eighteenth century to 1970. Through Nov. 24. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (weather permitting), with sculptures by Rodin, Lachaise, Lipchitz, Caro, Smith (David), and Smith (Tony). Through Oct. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper," the first exhibition in this country of drawings by the actor, dramatic theorist, and poet. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ Multimedia conceptual work by the Dutch artist Pieter Laurens Mol. Through Nov. 2. (He also has a show at Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St., through Nov. 9.) (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Selections from the permanent collection are on view. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"I'll Be Your Mirror," a twenty-five-year survey of portraits, self-portraits, interiors, and landscapes by the photographer Nan Goldin. Through Jan. 5. (A concurrent show of Goldin's work is at Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St., through Dec. 21.) . . . ¶ "Breuer's Whitney," a show of drawings, photographs, models, and other objects chosen to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of Marcel Breuer's gray granite upside-down ziggurat. Through Dec. 8. . . . ¶ "NYNY: City of Ambition." An anthology of twentieth-century images of New York drawn mostly from the permanent collection, presented in an installation as bold, entertaining, and aggressive as the city itself. Through Oct. 27. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Okavango: Africa's Last Eden," thirty large color photographs by Frans Lanting, of the wildlife of the Okavango Delta, in Botswana. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings by the American naturalist Titian Ramsay Peale (1799-1885). (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Mixing Messages: Graphic Design in Contemporary Culture" takes a look at the evolution in the field over the past fifteen years, with examples that include T-shirts, Web pages, TV spots, posters, magazines, and more. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

The Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Illegal Camera." The Nazi occupation of the Netherlands is best known to most of us through Anne Frank's diary, but another secret record of the era was made by Dutch photographers, both professional and amateur; a selection of their work has been gathered in this stunning exhibition. Through Dec. 1. . . . ¶ "From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800" presents two hundred and seventy paintings, sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, and ceremonial objects that tell the story of Jewish appointed officials—diplomats, financiers, minters, arms purveyors, art dealers—in the German courts of Europe. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ "Louis I. Kahn Drawings: Travel Sketches and Synagogue Projects," an exhibit of fifty-five works by the architect, in pastel, watercolor, charcoal, and tempera. Through Dec. 15. (More of Kahn's drawings and travel sketches are at Protetch, 560 Broadway, through Nov. 2.) (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Fine Line: Rembrandt as Etcher." Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Seventeenth-Century Dutch Drawings." Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Seeking the 'Splendid Misery': Presidential Races from Washington to Truman." Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

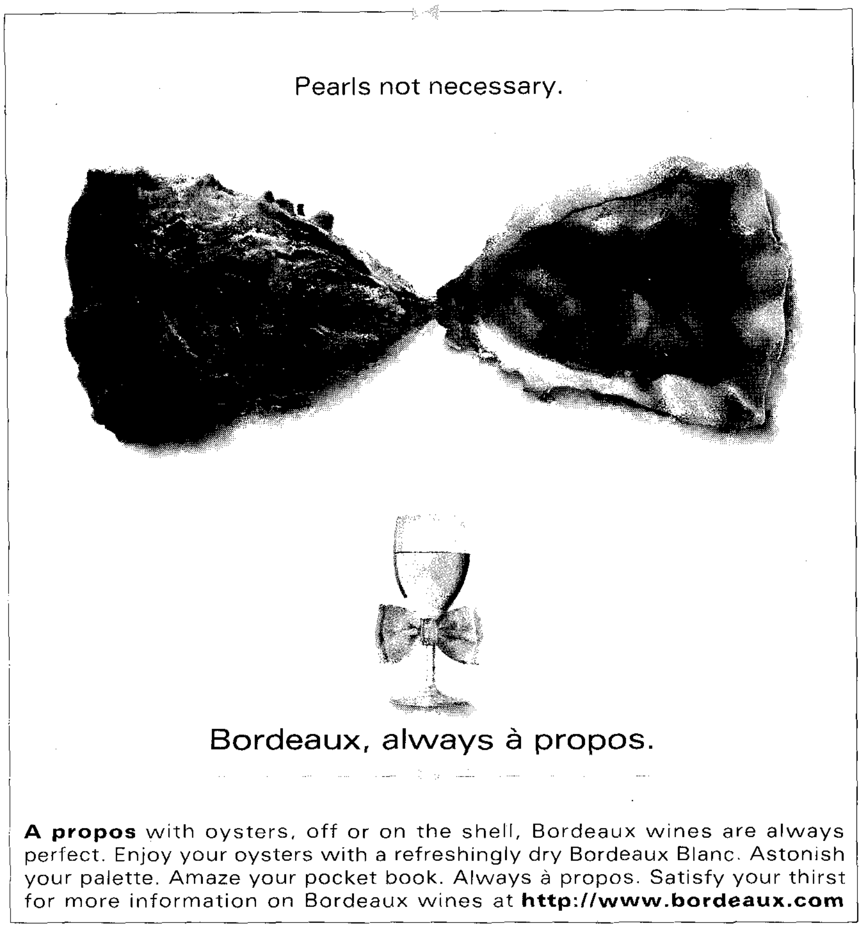
ONLY CONNECT

Web Sightings

Cyber-Seuss (http://www.afn.org/~afn15301/drseuss.html)—Since there's nothing like finding a familiar face in the morass of the World Wide Web, it's a pleasure to visit Cyber-Seuss—a home page dedicated to that great author and illustrator Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-91)—and be greeted by the benign and inscrutable Cat in the Hat. Here you will find all manner of Dr. Seuss trivia, including the story of how Geisel replaced the name Marvin K. Mooney, from his 1972 book, with that of the thirty-seventh President, and gave his friend Art Buchwald permission to publish the resulting poem. "Richard M. Nixon, Will You Please Go Now!" ("You can go by foot / You can go by cow") appeared in Buchwald's syndicated column on July 30, 1974; ten days later, Nixon resigned.

"Early Seuss Stuff" links up to some of Geisel's student work for *Jack o' Lantern*, the Dartmouth humor magazine: anti-Nazi cartoons (the Seuss style already recognizable), as well as writings that bespeak an absurdist's view of the language. On pondering the phrase "talking in the vernacular," the young Geisel observes, "A Vernacular is certainly not a shoe-shining stand, the footrests of which tower to the unbelievable height of ten feet six and one-half inches." To visualize such a contraption, you need only think of a Seuss landscape.

A young parent who goes by the Web handle D_Lister built the site as a labor of love, and it has its glitches: abundant typos, links that don't always link. But what it offers—reviews, bibliographies, anecdotes, a wonderful page of images (including the Lorax, the Grinch, and the doctor himself)—is so rich that it outweighs any quibbles. Consider, for instance, young Geisel's recommendation that parents who would *box* or *cuff* their children's ears try *buffing* their ears instead. Is it any wonder the good doctor held that his pen name rhymed not with juice but with Joyce?



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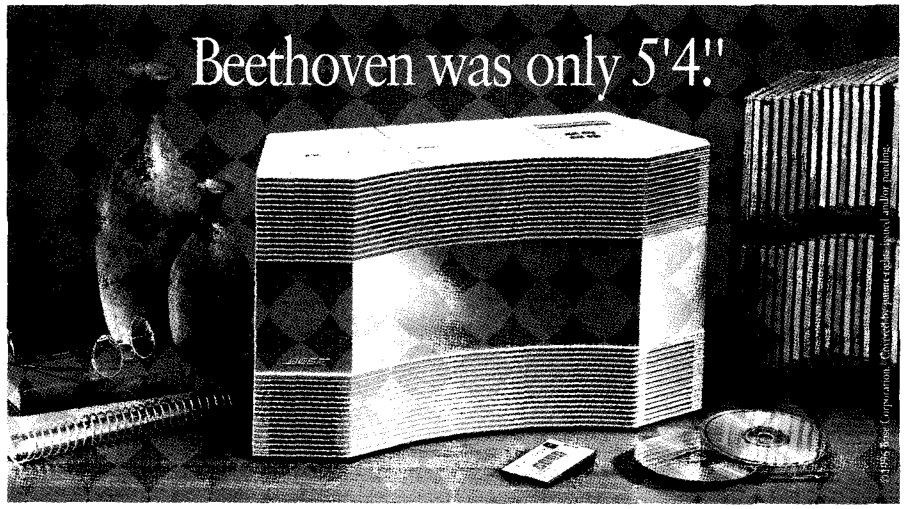

Beethoven was only 5'4".

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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, uptown and downtown galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; Chelsea galleries are open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Ralston Crawford (1906-78)—Paintings, works on paper, photographs, and prints of particularly American subjects—or, more precisely, American shapes and colors—in the artist's distinctive abstract style. Through Nov. 9. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

Robert Rauschenberg—The master of random juxtapositions has turned his hand to vegetable-dye transfers: huge, eye-catching jumbles of photographed people and places. They're enigmatic and stunningly handsome, but they leave you hungry for a little content. Through Oct. 19. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

Peter Sullivan—A promising first solo show by a young painter of geometric canvases with an expressionistic edge. Overlapping planes, alternating between brilliant primary colors and flat beiges and grays, vibrate in a hot, contemporary version of Mondrian's boogie-woogie. The artist has obviously looked long and hard at Hans Hofmann, too. There's nothing terribly original here, but he knows what he's doing. Through Oct. 12. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

Andy Warhol (1928-87)—Gagosian has devoted both its uptown and SoHo galleries to a gorgeous display of the late (1984) "Rorschach Paintings." Explaining their genesis, Warhol told an interviewer, "I thought that when you go to places like hospitals they tell you to draw and make Rorschach Tests. I wish I'd known there was a [standardized] set." Many of these enormous canvases recall Abstract Expressionist painting, but there's a subversive twist: the roiling phallic, vaginal, and intestinal shapes reduce transcendental aspiration (and sublimation) to the crudest rudiments of Freudian psychology. All the same, they're very beautiful. Through Oct. 19. (980 Madison Ave., at 76th St., and 136 Wooster St.)

Short List—**ANN AGEE,** Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. Through Nov. 2. . . . **JOHN ALEXANDER,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 19. . . . **JAN ARONSON,** Wächter, 111 E. 65th St. Through Oct. 12. . . . **TAMARA DE LEMPICKA,** Friedman, 32 E. 67th St. Through Nov. 30. . . . **LEONARDO DREW,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **ANDREW EHRENWORTH,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **LUCIAN FREUD,** Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Open Mondays; through Nov. 16. . . . **PHILIP GUSTON,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Nov. 9. . . . **BARBARA HEPWORTH,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. Open Mondays; through Nov. 16. . . . **YAYOI KUSAMA,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **MARKUS LÜPERTZ,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 26. . . . **PETER SAUL** and **ANDREW LENAGHAN,** Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Both shows through Oct. 31. . . . **TOM WESSELMANN,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through Oct. 26.

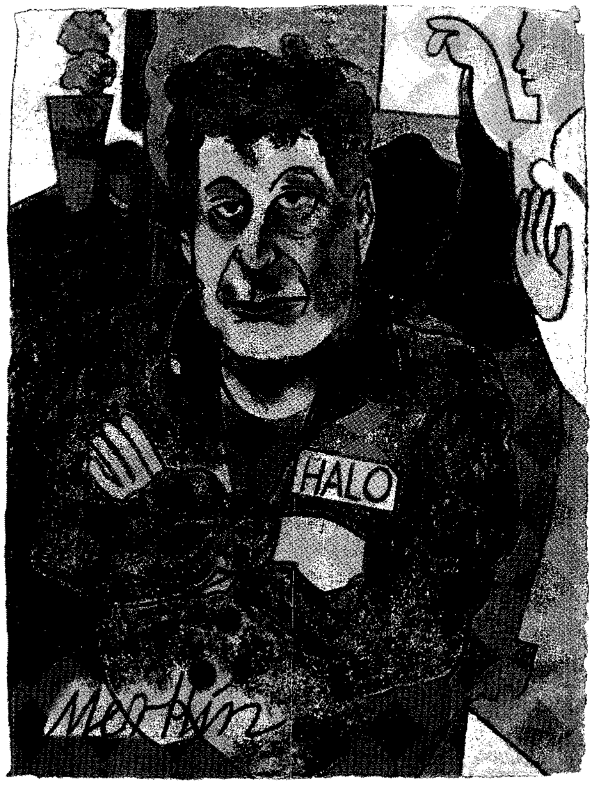
GALLERIES—CHELSEA

"American Dreamin' "—Sculptures, paintings, drawings, and audio works about guns, cars, drugs, sex, and religion. The perpetrators are Lutz Bacher, Mary Beth Edelson, Gregory Green, Cannon Hudson, Kim Jones, Tom Sachs, Fred Tomaselli, and the band Curdlefur. Through Oct. 13. (Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St.)

"The Speed of Painting"—New works by Laura Owens, Steven Parrino, Monique Prieto, and Scott Reeder. Through Oct. 13. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St.)

"Women's Work"—A wide range of large paintings, sculptures, and photographs by, among others, Lynda Benglis, Louise Bourgeois, Nan Goldin, Cady Noland, Cindy Sherman, Kiki Smith, and Nancy Spero. Through Oct. 13. (Greene/Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Short List—**PAUL D. MILLER,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Tuesdays, closed Sundays; through Oct. 12. . . . **DANI TULL,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. Through Oct. 13.



Italo Scanga, at Quartet Editions.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-88)—Since the artist's death, New York has seen a number of shows of inconsequential doodles dug up by his estate, but this one, billed as "an exhibition of important paintings, drawings, and objects," is, remarkably, just that. The large canvases radiate vitality and wit. A tribute to Nat King Cole includes Basquiat's signature cartoon crown, a sketch of the Mona Lisa as a demonic de Kooning woman, and a diagram of the artist's right and left hands (a reference to Cole's hit "Misty"). The most poignant piece is a child's easel painted with a screaming skull, which Basquiat gave to his friend Andy Warhol. Through Nov. 23. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Victor Estrada—Sculptures and drawings by a young California artist with a sensibility nourished on cartoons and science-fiction movies; he dwells on the truncated or decomposing forms of forlorn creatures that seem to have escaped from an institution for mentally challenged extraterrestrials. His sculptures all have a blunt ugliness, but he gets points for introducing the notion that E.T.s might actually be dumber than humans. Through Oct. 19. (Petzel, 26 Wooster St.)

Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel—The prize-winning sculptors' first gallery show in six years consists of profound and often simple works that have been thought through with scrupulous, tough-minded care and executed with astonishing precision: a burnished, gold-leafed hemisphere filled with fragile paper ash, sable *fleurs du mal*; a white pillar with the impression of a pair of lips near the top, exhaling a gentle breeze. But the most impressive pieces are complex geometric constructions that work on multiple visual and intellectual levels; in one, a lattice of mirrors coolly carves the viewer into a plane of hovering slices and inserts them into a constructivist abstraction that includes a revolving gold ball. Through Oct. 19. (Tz'art, 28 Wooster St.)

Italo Scanga—Prints, ceramics, and works in glass by an artist who combines found objects with sculpted and painted elements. Through Oct. 31. (Quartet Editions, 568 Broadway. . . . **NOTE:** A concurrent show of the artist's paintings and sculptures is on view, by appointment only, at Rosen & van Liere, 362 West Broadway, through Nov. 30. For more information, call 925-5425.)

Jim Shaw—Virtuosity fuses with nihilism to produce a dazzling display of work that echoes every school of contemporary art, in every medium: a giant plaster head of a post-Pop Jesus, studded with gruesome little images of martyred saints; Surrealist paintings in the style (though without the polish) of Dali; pseudo-gothic etchings expertly mimicking Edward Gorey; and a great deal more. Vacuous cartoon characters and male genitals—motifs of the moment in SoHo—pop up everywhere. Some visitors may carp at the gimmickiness, and Shaw isn't the first artist to make gimmickiness his gimmick, but a prodigious talent and a deft hand are behind it all. Through Oct. 19. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Richard Tuttle—Early and recent work by an important, if underestimated, post-minimalist sculptor. In the late sixties and early seventies, Tuttle became famous for his use of often fragile materials and for a radical dematerialization of the art object—some of his most extraordinary pieces were virtually invisible. "Paper Octagonal #1," from 1970, for example, is a delicate sheet of cut paper mounted almost completely flush with the wall. The more recent works are typically modest in scale, but they're more colorful (and more robust). Through Oct. 26. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Luc Tuymans—In a suite of cool, enigmatic paintings, a young Belgian explores once more that favorite terrain of contemporary European artists, the dark side of the American dream. The paintings (a man mixing toxic chemicals, a pair of baseball caps, Mt. Rushmore) are well composed, in the traditional modernist manner, and unified by a pale, greenish palette that suggests fluorescent light. You leave wondering what the Belgian dream might look like. Through Oct. 19. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

Short List—**RICHARD DE VORE** and **LOUIS I. KAHN,** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Both shows through Nov. 2. . . . **APRIL GORNIK,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. Through Nov. 9. . . . **WADE HOEFER** and **ALISON MORITSUGU,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. Both shows through Oct. 29. . . . **MARTIN KERSELS,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **TERENCE LA NOUE,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. Through Nov. 2. . . . **ROY LICHTENSTEIN,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through Oct. 26. . . . **PAUL MC CARTHY,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Through Oct. 12. . . . **PIETER LAURENS MOL,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through Nov. 9. . . . **JOEL SHAPIRO,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. Through Nov. 2. . . . **MATTHEW WEINSTEIN,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through Oct. 26. . . . **H. C. WESTERMANN,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through Oct. 12. . . . **HANNAH WILKE,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. Through Oct. 19.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Oct. 12: English furniture. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . At Chris-

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tie's East: Oct. 9: Rare books. . . . ¶ Oct. 14: Silver. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Sotheby's—Oct. 9: Impressionist paintings. . . . ¶ Oct. 11: English furniture and decorative arts. . . . ¶ Oct. 15: Ceramics. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

International Fine Art & Antique Dealers Show—7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Oct. 11-17. For information, call 642-8572.

Arts of Pacific Asia—26th Street Armory, Lexington Ave. at 26th St. Oct. 12-14. For information, call 683-2434.

Coliseum Antiques Show—Columbus Circle. Oct. 12-13. For information, call 255-0020.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Capa (1913-54)—In "The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939," the Hungarian photojournalist can be seen fighting Franco with photographs. The show's centerpiece—Capa's signature photograph of a bullet exiting the head of a Loyalist soldier—has, unfortunately, lost some potency in a world comfortable with images of violence. But when Capa gets close to his subjects their faces tell the whole story of the war: an impassioned Loyalist militiaman, a fleeing couple clutching a child and a lamb, civilians during an air raid looking up at dangers that lie beyond the frame. Through Oct. 18. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

Philip-Lorca diCorcia / Harry Callahan—In contrast with diCorcia's earlier psychological tableaux, which were rigorously controlled, the large color photographs in his recent series "Street Work" are only partly staged, and as a result they come closer to verisimilitude. / Fourteen small vintage prints of inky black telephone wires, some in droves, some lonely and attenuated, set against alabaster grounds. Graphic perfection. Both shows through Oct. 19. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Ralph Gibson—Selections from thirty-six years of high-contrast nudes, portraits, and more dreamlike images, which were characteristically published as series in books (notably "The Somnambulist," "Déjà-Vu," and "Days at Sea," all in the early seventies). The published sequences offered subtle associations of form and metaphor which illuminated the whole; such links can be found in this show as well, but each series is necessarily truncated, frustrating the associative eye. Single images carry the day here: an out-of-focus nude woman lying on a beach, facing the camera, while a grainy surf rumbles behind her; a white stick carried at a man's side, which rhymes magically with a bright white line painted on the street. Through Oct. 16. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Jerry Schatzberg—Glamorously gritty, evocative portraits—Catherine Deneuve, Anthony Quinn, Geoffrey Holder—along with similarly strong New York City scenes, by a well-known film director ("Puzzle of a Downfall Child," "Scarecrow," "Honeysuckle Rose"). Through Oct. 12. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

"Blind Spot: The First Four Years"—More than a hundred works that have appeared in the biannual journal, by such artists as Uta Barth, Alberto Caputo, Lynn Davis, Stan Douglas, Vik Muniz, James Welling, and Masao Yamamoto. Through Oct. 26. (Baldacci, 521 W. 23rd St.)

"Collection in Context"—In the past three years, the collector Henry M. Buhl has assembled a group of more than three hundred photographs on the theme of hands; a selection of sixty-seven works made since 1947 is on view in this striking show. Very large prints by Gary Schneider, Cindy Sherman, Irving Penn, Ralph Gibson, Chuck Close, and Andres Serrano engulf the viewer, while smaller—and sometimes more powerful—images by Bill Jacobson, Judy Dater, Eugene Richards, and Lynn Davis provide counterpoint. The awful coup de grâce comes from Gilles Peress: the torso of a young man in a Bosnian hospital bed, his raised forearms showing that his hands have been amputated. Through Oct. 19. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway.)

"Henri Cartier-Bresson in America 1935-1975"—The front room is devoted to crisp, intricately composed pictures of New York which make a city dweller want to borrow Cartier-Bresson's eyes for a while. Much of the remainder of the show dates from 1946-47, when the photographer travelled widely here. He chose many of the same subjects (crosses, cars, shop windows, black people, young couples) that Robert Frank did a decade later for "The Americans"; but, while Frank's America feels lonely and Beat, Cartier-Bresson's is everywhere imprinted with wry joy. There are also celebrity portraits: Edmund Wilson with his son, Faulkner with his dogs, Stravinsky with his cat, Truman Capote all by himself. Through Nov. 2. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. Open Mondays; opens Saturdays at noon.)

"Precisionist Poetics" / "Naked"—Seventies abstract photography with an urban bent, by four artists: Lewis Baltz, Michael Bishop, Ray Metzker, and Grant Mudford. / The exposed human body, from Nadar to Mapplethorpe. There are offerings in between from Arbus, Bellocq, Brandt, Friedlander, Hosoe, Weston, Witkin, and others. Both shows through Oct. 26. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

"What I Did on My Summer Vacation"—In a benefit project, a huge array of artists, critics, curators, collectors, and gallerists were given disposable cameras to use at their leisure; the results, displayed in photo albums, are to be raffled off. Through Oct. 20. (White Columns, 154 Christopher St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Landscapes of the Civil War." Selections from the five thousand recently discovered albumen prints in the collection of the Medford (Massachusetts) Historical Society. Through Nov. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"CHIM: The Photographs of David Seymour," a retrospective of works by one of the founders of Magnum Photos. Included are images of the Spanish Civil War, a study of children in Europe after the Second World War, coverage of the establishment of Israel, and portraits of twentieth-century notables. Through Nov. 3. . . . ¶ Portraits, views of New York City, and science photographs by Berenice Abbott, all from the center's permanent collection. Through Nov. 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**Phil Borges** and **John Claude White**, Lowinsky, 578 Broadway. Through Nov. 16. . . . **Joan Fontcuberta**, Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. Through Oct. 26. . . . **Nan Goldin**, Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through Dec. 21. . . . **Lewis Hine**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through Oct. 12. . . . **Charles Hoff**, Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through Nov. 16. . . . **Rudolf Koppitz**, Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **Mary Ellen Mark**, School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. Through Nov. 1. . . . **Richard Misrach**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Nov. 2. . . . **Pierre Molinier**, Ubu, 16 E. 78th St., and Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. Through Oct. 22 and Nov. 9, respectively. . . . **Marie-Claire Montanari** and **Jeanne Hamilton**, Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. Open weekdays, 9 to 5; both shows through Oct. 25. . . . **Miguel Rio Branco**, Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through Nov. 16. . . . **Shepard Sherbell**, SABA, 116 E. 16th St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through Nov. 1. . . . **Iwao Yamawaki**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through Nov. 16.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Jewish Museum.)

Barbara Bonney, with the Boston Symphony, at Carnegie Hall.

GISELLE POTTER

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**La Traviata**, with Victoria Loukianetz, Marcello Giordani, and Carlos Alvarez; conducted by Plácido Domingo. (Oct. 9 and Oct. 12 at 8.) . . . **The Bartered Bride**, with Teresa Stratas, David Kuebler, Vladimir Bogachov, and Paul Plishka; James Levine. (Oct. 10 at 8.) . . . **Andrea Chénier**, with Maria Guleghina, Luciano Pavarotti, and Juan Pons; Mr. Levine. (Oct. 11 and Oct. 15 at 8.) . . . **Fedora**, with Mirella Freni, Ainhoa Arteta, Plácido Domingo, and Dwayne Croft; Roberto Abbado. (Oct. 12 at 1:30.) . . . **Rigoletto**, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Frank Lopardo, and Frederick Burchinal; Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 14 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**The Turn of the Screw.** (Oct. 9 at 8.) . . . **Carmen.** (Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **Madama Butterfly.** (Oct. 12 at 1:30.) . . . **Falstaff.** (Oct. 12 at 8.) . . . **H.M.S. Pinafore.** (Oct. 13 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

DiCapo Opera Theatre—Final performances of "Les Contes d'Hoffmann." (184 E. 76th St. 288-9438. Oct. 11-12 at 8 and Oct. 13 at 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Semyon Bychkov conducting. Oct. 10 and Oct. 12 at 8, Oct. 11 at 2, and Oct. 15 at 7:30: Kodály's "Dances of Galanta" and Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra," as well as Bartók's Two Rhapsodies for Violin and Orchestra and Ravel's "Tzigane" (both featuring violinist Vadim Repin.) . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 2: The Kodály and Strauss works as above, plus Dvořák's Piano Quintet (Op. 81, performed by pianist Gerald Robbins and string players from the orchestra). (875-5030.)

"Songfest"—Bernstein's vocal cycle bows in a new chamber orchestration, here performed by six singers and the Janus Ensemble (conducted by Michael Barrett). The evening concludes with the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble performing its signature dance classic, "Revelations." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 9 at 8.)

Boston Symphony—Recent brushes with Barbara Bonney's performances suggest that she has matured from a songbird (though one with a splendid lyric-soprano voice) into an artist with real interpretative depth. In this concert, she'll be featured in Barber's nostalgic portrait of small-town America, "Knoxville: Summer of 1915." Mahler's Symphony No. 5 completes the program. Seiji Ozawa conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 9-10 at 8.)

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Boston Pops Orchestra—The actor and singer Jason Alexander joins the orchestra and conductor Keith Lockhart for a salute to classics of American popular song. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Choral Symphony Society—The society's orchestra performs Mozart's B-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 595, with Frank Glazer) and his "Litaniae Lauretanae" (K. 195, with the Cantata Singers). David Labovitz directs. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Oct. 13 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz leads Bright Sheng's "H'un (Lacerations)," Hindemith's "Nobilissima Visione" (in its original ballet scoring), and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Alicia de Larrocha). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 13 at 5 and Oct. 16 at 7:30.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts Chopin's "Polish Fantasy" and "Variations on Mozart's 'Là ci darem' " (both featuring pianist Ann Schein), Benjamin Godard's "Gothic" Symphony, and Carl Stamitz's Clarinet Concerto No. 3 (with Seunghee Lee). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Oct. 14 at 2 and 7 and Oct. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

San Juan Children's Choir—A Columbus Day salute by this internationally acclaimed Puerto Rican youth choir, now celebrating its thirtieth season. The eclectic program (directed by Evy Lucío) includes works by Pablo Casals, Jack Délano, and Ernesto Lecuona. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 14 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Marko Ylönen—In his New York début recital, the Finnish cellist, who was awarded first prize in the 1996 Concert Artists Guild competition, plays sonatas by Schnittke, Beethoven (his Fifth), and Debussy, as well as Schumann's "Phantasiestücke"; with pianist Jan Schultsz. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 9 at 7.)

Tomas Bächli and Gertrud Schneider—This Swiss piano duo specializes in quarter-tone repertoire: one of their pianos is tuned precisely half a semitone below the other. The evening includes two discrete segments—you may attend either or both—comprising early-twentieth-century music by Ives and by the Russian microtonal pioneer Ivan Vishnegradsky, as well as more recent pieces by James Tenney, Virgil Moorefield, and others. (Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway, third floor. Oct. 10 at 7 and 9. No tickets necessary. . . . **note:** The duo also presents a shorter quarter-tone program at La Mama Galleria, 6 E. 1st St., on Oct. 12 at 9. Admission by contribution.)

Meranofest—The international piano institute, which offers advanced study and performance opportunities in Merano, Italy, and Mannheim, Germany, as well as in New York, is holding master classes in town this week. In the evenings, student participants perform in free concerts. (Yamaha Artists Services, 111 Eighth Ave., at 15th St. Oct. 10-14 at 7:30. For reservations, call 366-5763, ext. 7.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Kerry McDermott and pianist Sung-Mi Im perform Schumann's A-Minor Violin Sonata; cellist Warren Lash joins them for Beethoven's C-Minor Piano Trio; and violist Paul Neubauer completes the ensemble for Brahms's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Oct. 10 at 7:30 and Oct. 13 at 4.)

New York Philomusica—The ensemble offers Mozart's C-Major String Quintet (K. 515), the première of Iain Hamilton's Piano Quintet, and Schubert's String Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 10 at 8.)

Friends and Enemies of New Music—The ensemble performs works by Friends and Enemies regulars Tom Cipullo, John Link, and Ben Yarmolinsky, as well as by the five composers of Vienna's Projekt Uraufführung: Maximilian Kreuz, Zbigniew Bargielski, Paul Hertel, Gerd Noack, and Gerhard Präsent. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 10 at 8.)

Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich—A paradox to torment music lovers: of all pianists, Ms. Argerich is at once the most likely and the least likely to deliver a riveting performance—the most likely because nobody approaches her primal passion at the keyboard; the least likely because you never know whether she's going to show up. The wise listener simply buys a ticket and hopes for the best. However, chances of actually hearing her play improve markedly when she has committed to partnering a close musical colleague, and Mr. Maisky, the cellist, is one of the closest. On the program are Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 5, Stravinsky's "Suite Italienne," Schumann's "Phantasiestücke," and Shostakovich's Cello Sonata. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—The estimable foursome has spent so much of the past season celebrating its fiftieth birthday that the actual event seems almost an afterthought. It was, however, on October 11, 1946—not October 10, as has often been reported—that the four players (including first violinist Robert Mann, the only charter member still with the group) performed their first concert together, thus realizing the goal of William Schuman (then president of the Juilliard School) to attach a world-class chamber-music ensemble to the conservatory. (The group waited more than a year to début formally, at Town Hall, on December 23, 1947.) This semicentennial performance is thoroughly typical of the ensemble's tastes, bringing together something classic (Mozart's G-Major Quartet, K. 387), something modernist (Schoenberg's Quartet No. 1), and something brand new (the première of Babbitt's Clarinet Quintet, in which Charles Neidich will assist). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Oct. 11 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

A MAZE FOR RATS

Stirring creatures: the National Rat and Mouse Show.

EMMANUEL PIERRE

Julia Migenes—The soprano will create her program of art songs on the spur of the moment, announcing each number from the stage. (Colden Center, Queens College. 718-793-8080. Oct. 13 at 2.)

Peter Serkin—The pianist performs works by Takemitsu, Reger, and Beethoven (his "Moonlight" and "Waldstein" Sonatas). (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Oct. 13 at 2.)

Salon Soirées—Vocal and instrumental music by Handel, Alessandro Scarlatti, C. P. E. Bach, and Schubert, in an upstairs music room. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Oct. 13 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Gila Goldstein—Pianist, performing works by Schumann (his "Kreisleriana") and Chopin. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Oct. 14 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Guarneri Quartet and Orion String Quartet—Last season, the Guarneri focussed on repertoire for string quartet with voice; this year, they turn their sights toward works for "expanded string quartet," especially string sextets—a luscious segment of the repertoire somewhat neglected for reasons of expense and logistics. In this program, members of the Guarneri mix with those of the Orion String Quartet in a program comprising Mozart's G-Minor Quintet (K. 516), Brahms's G-Major Sextet, and Mendelssohn's ebullient Octet. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 15 at 8. . . . **note:** On Oct. 9 at 8, the Orion String Quartet will play quartets by Beethoven, Ravel, and Tchaikovsky, in a free concert at the Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Playing piano trios by Brahms (his Second) and Beethoven (the "Ghost" and the "Archduke"). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 15-16 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Everyone's an Expert—At first glance, it seems like the perfect site, but, surprisingly, New York City has never hosted a National Rat and Mouse Show. That changes this Sunday, when a United Nations of rodents—Dutch, Himalayan, Siamese, Norwegian, and the ubiquitous English—converges upon the cafeteria of Richard Green High School, on the Upper East Side. Entrants will be judged and decorated according to breed, color, and personality (e.g., cutest mouse, most laid-back young rat). Rodent owners tend to divide into two groups—rat fiends and mousey types. Show organizer Debra Jane Seltzer, for example, is in the rat camp, with fifteen (Curly, Brownie, Stumpy, Runty, Dumbo, etc.). "Rats are like dogs, they're affectionate," she says. "Mice are more like tropical fish: they're skittish, they come in lots of colors, you watch them in a tank. But rats are something you can handle and hang with." (421 E. 88th St. Doors open to exhibitors at 7:30 a.m., Oct. 13; the public is welcome from 9 to 5. For more information, call 718-788-7386.)

Critical Waves—According to a recent report on surfer Lars Svanberg's wave hot line (516-537-7873), "The crowds are gone and we're psyched." So is the rest of New York's surfing community: October unloads some tasty swells on Long Island's East End beaches, and on October 12 the New York State Amateur Surfing Championships descend upon Ditch Plains, Montauk. Terry Patterson, the reigning champ in both the women's long-board and short-board events, says that judges reward competitors who "execute the most radical controlled maneuvers in the critical section of the wave with speed and power." The championships attract surfers at all skill levels, and, since there are no qualifying rounds, even ho-dads from Brooklyn can attempt to hang ten. (For a full schedule of events, call the New York district headquarters of the Eastern Surfing Association, at 516-537-1182.)

Reading—Oct. 11 at 9: Allan Gurganus, Scott Heim, and Stephen McCauley, among others, read their contributions to "Boys Like Us," a collection of coming-out stories. (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—Oct. 12-13 at 12:30: Forty years after the Brooklyn Dodgers' final World Series appearance, Richard Anthony revisits the Brooklyn Heights stomping grounds of such immortal Bums as Duke Snider, Leo Durocher, and Cookie Lavagetto. For more information, call 465-3331.

AMERICA UNDERCOVER PRESENTS

WITHOUT PITY

A FILM ABOUT ABILITIES

NARRATED BY CHRISTOPHER REEVE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 10:30 PM ET/PT HBO

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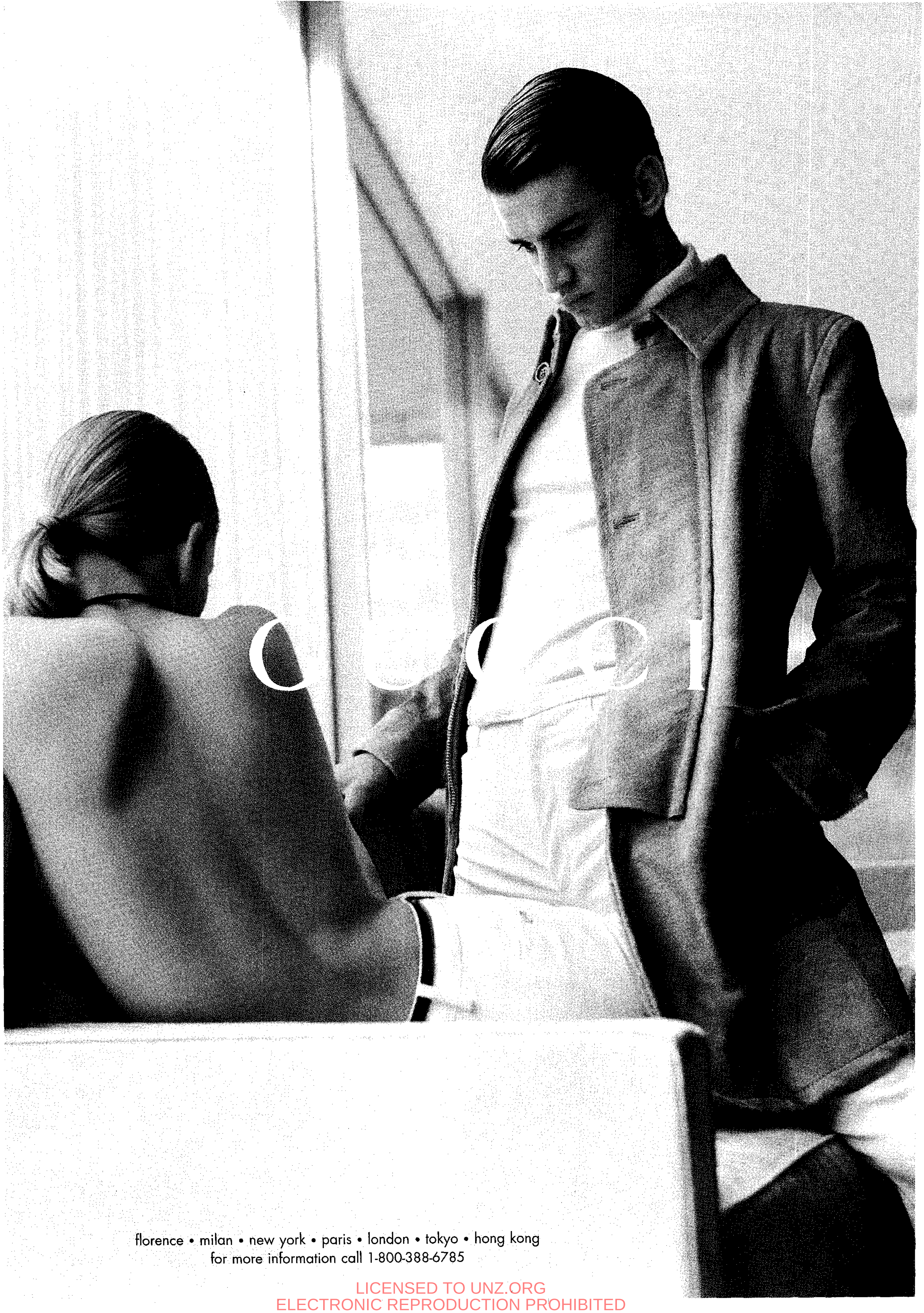

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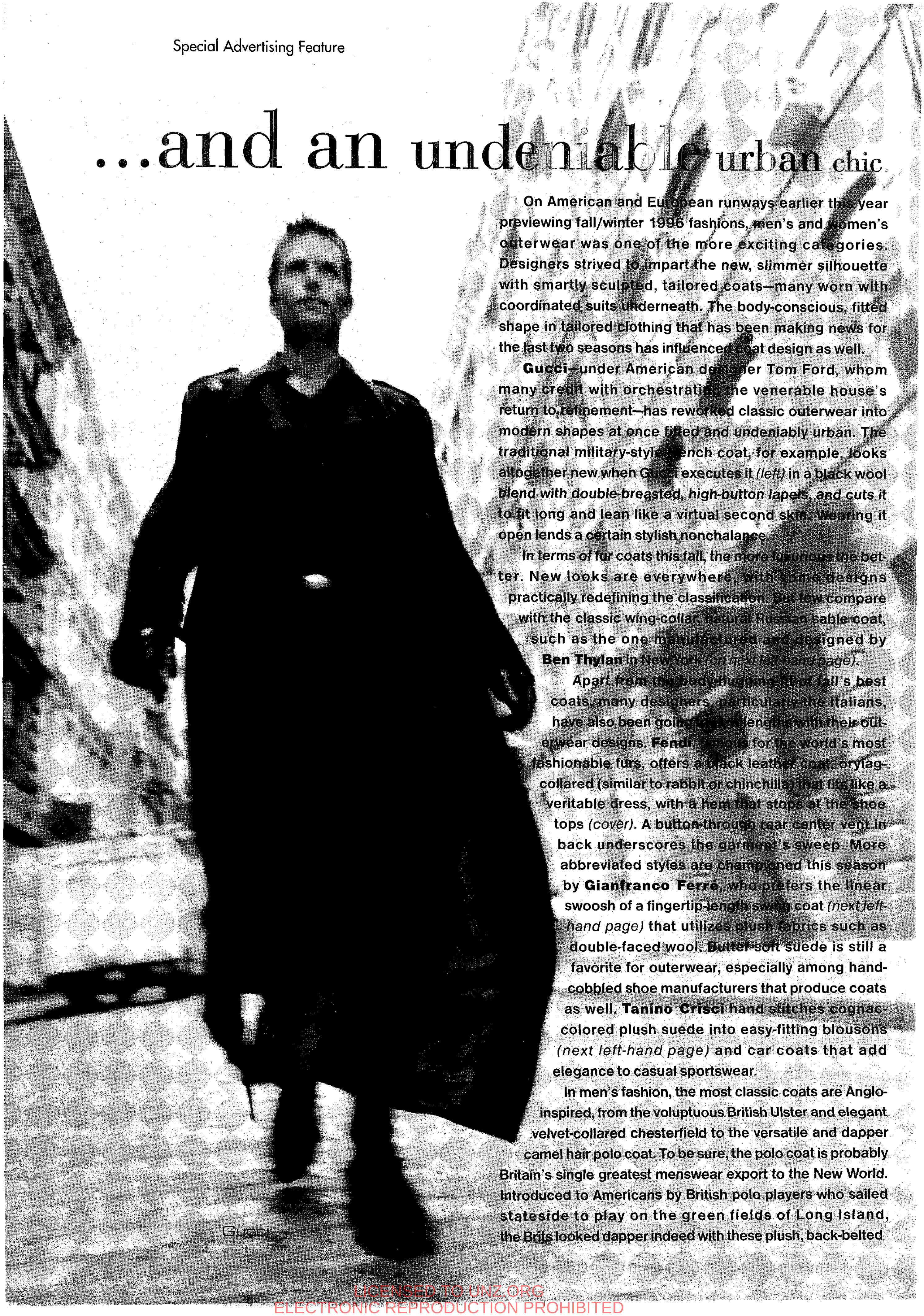
IN PRAISE OF...THE COAT

The coat, in its myriad manifestations is a necessary component of any wardrobe. Yet it suffered through ignoble beginnings, criticized by nineteenth century tailors, obviously with a needle to grind. It was reviled as essentially shapeless, lacking waist suppression, well-placed seams, pleats, and other tailoring details—in a mass of crude fabric that fell like a sack. Fashion legend has it that the first overcoats drew inspiration from the weighty, coarse outer garments (replete with huge pockets and a plethora of buttons) worn by French sailors more than a century ago. In 1839, so the story goes, the comte D'Orsay, in need of a cloak to brave the inclement weather, borrowed one of these overcoats from a seaman. Viewed as a man of wealth and taste, not to mention style, the count wore this unseamly sailor's coat into fashion infamy.

Much has changed in the 150 years since this unlikely story of a French sailor's largesse was first recorded in fashion annals. While the coat may have been born of function, in the modern era, form is more to the fore. Coats today have ement. swagger. style.

By Ralph DiGennaro
Photography by Norman Jean Roy
Cover Coat: Fendi

...and an undeniable urban chic.



Gucci

On American and European runways earlier this year previewing fall/winter 1996 fashions, men's and women's outerwear was one of the more exciting categories. Designers strived to impart the new, slimmer silhouette with smartly sculpted, tailored coats—many worn with coordinated suits underneath. The body-conscious, fitted shape in tailored clothing that has been making news for the last two seasons has influenced coat design as well.

Gucci—under American designer Tom Ford, whom many credit with orchestrating the venerable house's return to refinement—has reworked classic outerwear into modern shapes at once fitted and undeniably urban. The traditional military-style trench coat, for example, looks altogether new when Gucci executes it *(left)* in a black wool blend with double-breasted, high-button lapels, and cuts it to fit long and lean like a virtual second skin. Wearing it open lends a certain stylish nonchalance.

In terms of fur coats this fall, the more luxurious the better. New looks are everywhere, with some designs practically redefining the classification. But few compare with the classic wing-collar, natural Russian sable coat, such as the one manufactured and designed by **Ben Thylan** in New York *(on next left-hand page)*.

Apart from the body-hugging fit of fall's best coats, many designers, particularly the Italians, have also been going to new lengths with their outerwear designs. **Fendi**, famous for the world's most fashionable furs, offers a black leather coat, orylag-collared (similar to rabbit or chinchilla) that fits like a veritable dress, with a hem that stops at the shoe tops *(cover)*. A button-through rear center vent in back underscores the garment's sweep. More abbreviated styles are championed this season by **Gianfranco Ferré**, who prefers the linear swoosh of a fingertip-length swing coat *(next left-hand page)* that utilizes plush fabrics such as double-faced wool. Butter-soft suede is still a favorite for outerwear, especially among hand-cobbled shoe manufacturers that produce coats as well. **Tanino Crisci** hand stitches cognac-colored plush suede into easy-fitting blousons *(next left-hand page)* and car coats that add elegance to casual sportswear.

In men's fashion, the most classic coats are Anglo-inspired, from the voluptuous British Ulster and elegant velvet-collared chesterfield to the versatile and dapper camel hair polo coat. To be sure, the polo coat is probably Britain's single greatest menswear export to the New World. Introduced to Americans by British polo players who sailed stateside to play on the green fields of Long Island, the Brits looked dapper indeed with these plush, back-belted

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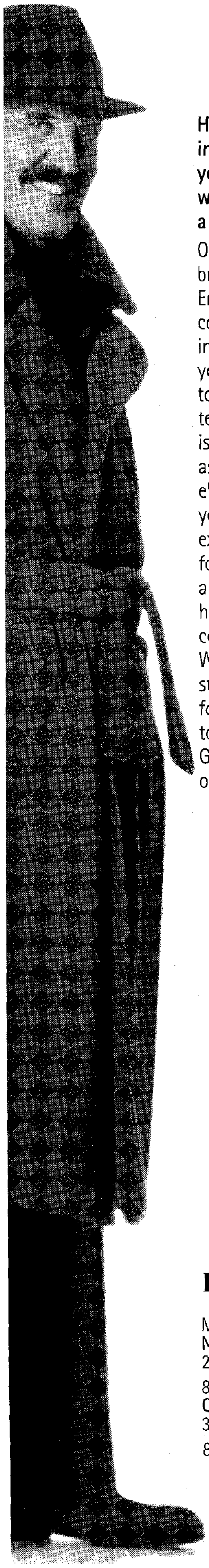

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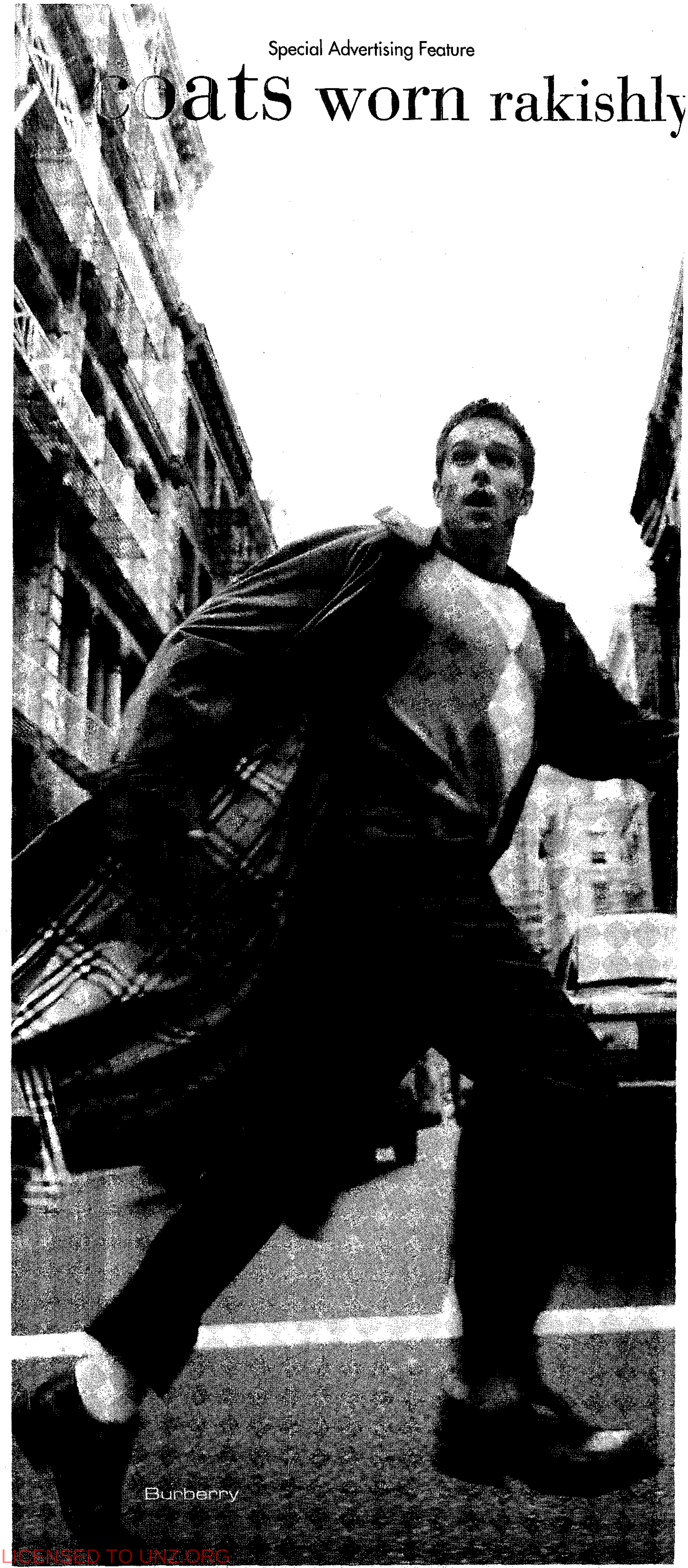

draped over their shoulders while they relaxed between chukkers.

Traditional men's stores such as **Paul Stuart** in New York continue to stock the most handsome polo coats this side of Savile Row. Equally English is the raglan sleeve, military-inspired trench coat as first conceived by Thomas Burberry, whose understanding with regard to preparedness served his country well at the beginning of World War I. Today, the pure wool gabardine that goes into **Burberrys'** classic, wool-lined trench *(opposite page)* has been augmented by advanced techno-fabrics such as suede-soft Microfibre, which provides protection and lightweight comfort—virtues the military would have appreciated. So enamored were the British officers of the Burberry trench that, according to legend, one commander, Lord Kitchener, was actually buried in his.

But perhaps one should never become that attached to a coat...no matter how fashionable it may be. ◆

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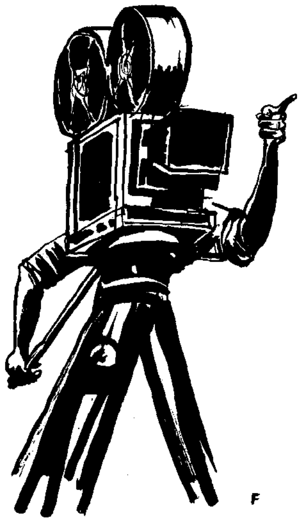


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

BEAUTIFUL THING—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening Oct. 9.

CALLING THE GHOSTS: A STORY ABOUT RAPE, WAR AND WOMEN—A documentary by Mandy Jacobson and Karmen Jelincic, about crimes against humanity during the recent war in the Balkans. Opening Oct. 11. (Cinema Village.)

THE CHAMBER—Gene Hackman plays a death-row inmate and Chris O'Donnell his idealistic grandson, in James Foley's adaptation of the 1994 John Grisham novel. Opening Oct. 11. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS—Michael Douglas and Val Kilmer go lion hunting in late-nineteenth-century Kenya, in a drama directed by Stephen Hopkins. Opening Oct. 11. (Astor Plaza, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Street Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th St. East, and Waverly.)

THE GRASS HARP—Charles Matthau directs a large cast, including Edward Furlong, Nell Carter, Piper Laurie, and Sissy Spacek, in an adaptation of Truman Capote's 1951 novella. Opening Oct. 11. (Cinema II, Regency, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT—Geena Davis stars as an amnesiac teacher who begins to remember her former life as a secret agent, in a thriller directed by Renny Harlin. With Samuel L. Jackson as a private detective. Opening Oct. 11. (Cinema I, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

LOOKING FOR RICHARD—A movie that combines filmed segments of "Richard III" with a documentary about their making. Directed by and starring Al Pacino. Opening Oct. 11.

LOVE IS ALL THERE IS—A romantic comedy set in the Bronx, about a pair of teen-agers (Nathaniel Marson and Angelina Jolie) from rival Italian families, who fall in love while performing in a production of "Romeo and Juliet." With Paul Sorvino, Joseph Bologna, and Renee Taylor. Written and directed by Bologna and Taylor. Opening Oct. 11.

MICHAEL COLLINS—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 11. (Beekman, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

MICROCOSMOS—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening Oct. 9.

THE PROPRIETOR—Jeanne Moreau has the role of a French writer who, after three decades in New York, decides to return to Paris, in a drama directed by Ismail Merchant. Opening Oct. 9. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

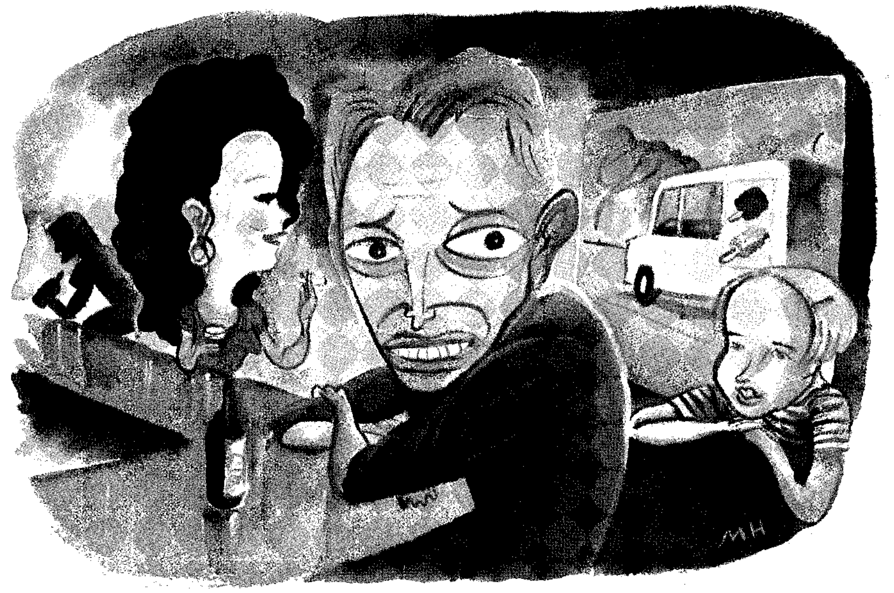
THREE LIVES AND ONLY ONE DEATH—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening Oct. 11.

TREES LOUNGE—Steve Buscemi stars as a barfly turned ice-cream-truck driver, in a bleak comedy he wrote and directed. With Debi Mazar, Chloe Sevigny, Elizabeth Bracco, and Anthony LaPaglia. Opening October 11. (Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 38.)

BEAUTIFUL THING—An urban fairy tale, set in London, about first love between two sixteen-year-old boys. While the boys aren't particularly original—one (Glen Berry) is bashful and loves old movies, the other (Scott Neal) is abused by a drunken father—the supporting players are: the young black girl who lives next door and loves Mama Cass (her lovely, trashy songs play throughout the movie); the single mom's boyfriend, an aging hippie who makes slackers seem motivated. The director, Hettie Macdonald, films through rose-colored glasses that capture the humor and charm of the story but not the drama. The movie is a mixed bag, but it has sweet performances and some wonderful moments, and the teen-agers'



Opening October 11, Debi Mazar, Steve Buscemi, and Chloe Sevigny in "Trees Lounge."

MARCELLUS HALL

coupling is a true accomplishment: when they touch and cuddle and kiss, an older gay audience may have moments of blissful nostalgia for adolescent innocence.—B.D. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema; starting Oct. 9.)

Big Night—The actor Stanley Tucci co-wrote (with Joseph Tropiano), co-directed (with Campbell Scott), and co-stars (with Tony Shalhoub) in this elegant, leisurely low-budget comedy about a struggling Italian restaurant run by a pair of immigrant brothers. The unusually happy, relaxed ensemble includes Ian Holm, Isabella Rossellini, Minnie Driver, Allison Janney, and Campbell Scott. The big set piece—a lavish dinner in honor of the singer-bandleader Louis Prima—is a fitting climax to the movie's patient accumulation of savory and blissfully pointless delights: a convincing illustration of how keen pleasure for pleasure's sake can be.—T.R. (9/23/96) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East.)

Bound—An offbeat first feature directed by the brothers Larry and Andy Wachowski, in a dazzling style highly derivative of the brothers Joel and Ethan Coen. The story, about a mobster's girlfriend and a handywoman who team up to rip off the mob, is pure noir fun—especially since Jennifer Tilly, who plays the moll with a voice more breathless than Marilyn Monroe's, gives it all she's got. Her scenes with Gina Gershon, the butch plumber with a Gene Tierney overbite, ring with the tough-guy knowingness of forties thrillers. When the women become lovers and scheme to steal two million dollars from Tilly's boyfriend (Joe Pantoliano), the sleek production design—rich blacks, bright whites, deep reds—develops a charged, dangerous ambience. Between the Wachowskis' technical skill (the wonderful camera work is by the rock-video director Bill Pope) and the all too convincing twists and turns of the plot, the characters might have easily gotten lost; but Tilly and Gershon are a gorgeous couple, and their sexy, stylish repartee steals the film.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story—An oddly humdrum biography of Dorothy Day (Moira Kelly), who abandoned the glamorous Manhattan bohemia of the twenties to found a weekly, the *Catholic Worker*, and went on to inspire thousands of followers with her four decades of peace activism and her ministry to the poor. If ever a life story deserved telling, this is it. Michael Rhodes and John Wells, the director and screenwriter, have honorable intentions, but they resort to some pretty stale devices (such as an opening that tries to pass off Kelly—clearly young, beautiful, and wrinkle-free—as an old lady in jail, about to reminisce), and they overstress Day's failed relationships with caddish men; ultimately they seem less interested in exploring her life than in rendering her likable to an apathetic audience dumbed down by TV. With Martin Sheen as Day's eccentric, frequently shoeless French mentor, Peter Maurin.—S.K. (Lincoln Square.)

Extreme Measures—This thriller, about a young doctor (Hugh Grant) investigating a mysterious emergency-room death, zips along nicely for an hour or so, sustained by the intelligence and skill of the director, Michael Apted. But, halfway through, Tony Gilroy's screenplay (based on a novel by Michael Palmer) begins to exhibit disturbing symptoms of high seriousness, and Apted, try as he might, is helpless to reverse the movie's decline. The picture dwindles to a confrontation between the hero and an eminent doctor (Gene Hackman) whose research ethics are on the shaky side; they discuss the question of whether scientists should play God. Flatline. Also with Sarah Jessica Parker and David Morse.—T.R. (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gemini, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

Infinity—The hero of Matthew Broderick's film is the theoretical physicist Richard P. Feynman, who died in 1988 at the age of sixty-nine, and who was legendary among his colleagues both for the profound originality of

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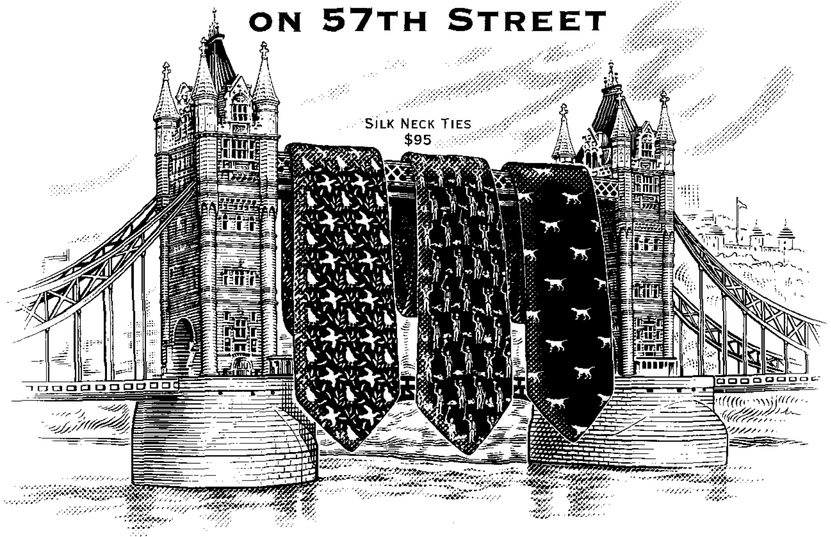

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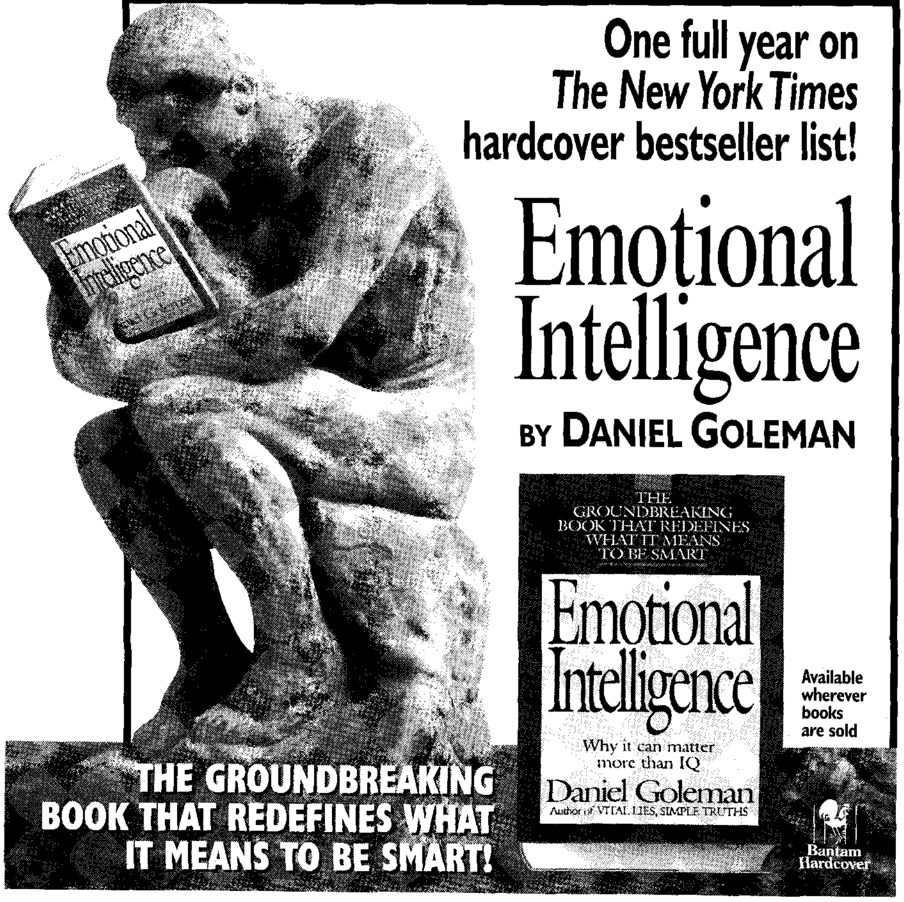

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his thinking and for the profound eccentricity of his personality. Broderick plays the physicist; the screenplay, by Patricia Broderick (the star's mother), concentrates on Feynman's relationship with his first wife, Arline (Patricia Arquette), and on his work on the Manhattan Project in Los Alamos. The picture ends, in 1945, with twin climaxes: Arline's death and the first successsful A-bomb test. The filmmakers are disappointingly vague about Feynman's role in the development of the bomb—they handle the subject as if it were plutonium—and the movie also fails to do justice to the antic, mischievous aspect of his character. But something of value does manage to break through, and it comes from an unexpected source: the love story of Richard and Arline. Arquette is terrific, and Broderick does his best acting when he's sharing the screen with her. The scientist's reaction to his wife's death—part resignation, part shock, part simple curiosity about the physical phenomenon—provides the picture with its most original and most moving scene. Also with Peter Riegert.—T.R. (10/7/96) (Art Greenwich Twin, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

Opening October 9, "Microcosmos."

Microcosmos—"Open your eyes before you die," a boy soprano sings at the start of this revelatory documentary about insects; then we descend from the clouds into the grass, dirt, and puddles of a meadow in the French countryside. The directors, Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou, who were trained as biologists, spent years designing cameras that would capture spiders, butterflies, beetles, and bees in their habitats as never before; the result is a rare communion of scientific curiosity and New Age wonder. There are no voice-overs, just closeups of bugs—eating, having sex, building a house, commuting to work in a storm, and even, apparently, lining up for some kind of ceremonial parade. A few sequences surpass the most horrific science fiction, but a surprising number of the creatures are quite cute; by the end, the film seems to be arguing (convincingly) that insects are people, too. The inventive, funny-ethereal score is by Bruno Coulais.—S.K. (Film Forum 3; starting Oct. 9.)

Secrets & Lies—Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), the heroine of Mike Leigh's broadest and most ambitious film to date, decides after the death of her adoptive mother to seek her biological one. The quest turns up Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn), who freaks out: Hortense is middle-class and black, Cynthia working-class and white. Leigh has a feel for the grain of ordinary London life, and he inlays his depictions of it with elaborate jokes—but believing his stories is another matter. He doesn't seem to know whether to tell this one straight or spice it up with laughs. The agonizingly long sequence in which the two women work out the awful truth over cups of tea encapsulates the movie: while Jean-Baptiste gives a quiet, pacific performance, Blethyn deals in spasms of exaggeration which belong in another film altogether. Still, there is a fine supporting cast—Cynthia has a grumpy daughter (Claire Rushbrook), a long-suffering brother (Timothy Spall), and a distraught sister-in-law (Phyllis Logan), and they all gather in the final scene, a cathartic barbecue that starts off as nicely choreographed light comedy and darkens to a Bergman-like chorus of wailing women and slightly overcooked dialogue. "We're all in pain," moans Spall. "Why can't we share our pain?" You can't help suspecting that Leigh is happier with unshared pain.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

Surviving Picasso—Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's refreshingly dry, offbeat screenplay treats the mid-century love affair between Pablo Picasso (Anthony Hopkins) and Françoise Gilot (Natascha McElhone) according to the feminist line that each of the painter's stylistic periods was nourished by a woman, whom he coaxed and flattered like a toy poodle, then slowly turned into his slave and abandoned to madness; only Gilot, through some inexplicable strength of character, got out unscathed. In unexpected ways, McElhone's amazingly wooden performance supports this view. She's too cold and introverted—a robot with perfect cheekbones, who announces in self-serving voice-overs that she never took money from her lover—to be a victim for long. Hopkins doesn't exactly play it for sympathy, either, but at least his hypocritical, sublimely manipulative Picasso evens the match. Based on "Picasso: Creator and Destroyer," the biography by Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington. Directed by James Ivory.—S.K. (Paris and Village Theatre VII.)

That Thing You Do!—Tom Hanks's début as a writer and director traces the rapid rise and fall of a fictitious rock-and-roll band called the Wonders. Hanks plays a supporting role, as a slick record-company executive; his performance, modest and tossed-off though it is, effortlessly outclasses his thin script and primitive direction. The movie, which is set in 1964, tries to get by on the good will created by its bright production design, its bouncy tone, and its nostalgia for the "innocent" pop culture of the Beatles era, but by the third or fourth rendition—out of what seem like hundreds—of the bubble-gummy title song, viewers of a certain age may feel the stirrings of less pleasurable memories. Watching this picture is almost exactly like the narcoleptic, I.Q.-sapping experience of sitting through an inane beach-party musical or one of the lamer Elvis vehicles (and movies don't get much lamer than that). Also with Tom Everett Scott (who not only resembles a young Hanks but appears to be imitating his every comic mannerism), Liv Tyler, Steve Zahn, and Johnathon Schaech.—T.R. (10/7/96) (Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, National Twin, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)

Three Lives and Only One Death—Marcello Mastroianni stars as an errant husband, a Sorbonne professor, a butler, and a businessman, in four witty vignettes (two of them suggested by eerie Nathaniel Hawthorne tales) directed by Raúl Ruiz and set in modern-day Paris. Ruiz has an avant-gardist reputation, but for all his artiness he obviously loves the corny enchantment of old-fashioned storytelling. The surprise is that the picture improves whenever Mastroianni is out of it. His charisma and radiance are too strong; when he appears, allegedly mysterious situations become transparent and predictable, like highbrow "Twilight Zone" segments. With Anna Galiena, Marica Paredes, and Chiara Mastroianni (the actor's daughter, who does quite well as half of an oversexed but strangely innocent young couple). Written by Ruiz and Pascal Bonitzer. In French (though it's one of the Chilean-born Ruiz's jokes that almost everyone is foreign and speaks with an accent).—S.K. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting Oct. 11.)

ALSO PLAYING

D3: The Mighty Ducks: 86th Street East Twin, Guild, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **The First Wives Club:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **The Glimmer Man:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gemini, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **Last Man Standing** (reviewed in our issue of 9/23/96): Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Orpheum VII. . . . **2 Days in the Valley:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Showplace.

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Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
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Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, *2 W. 59th St.*
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
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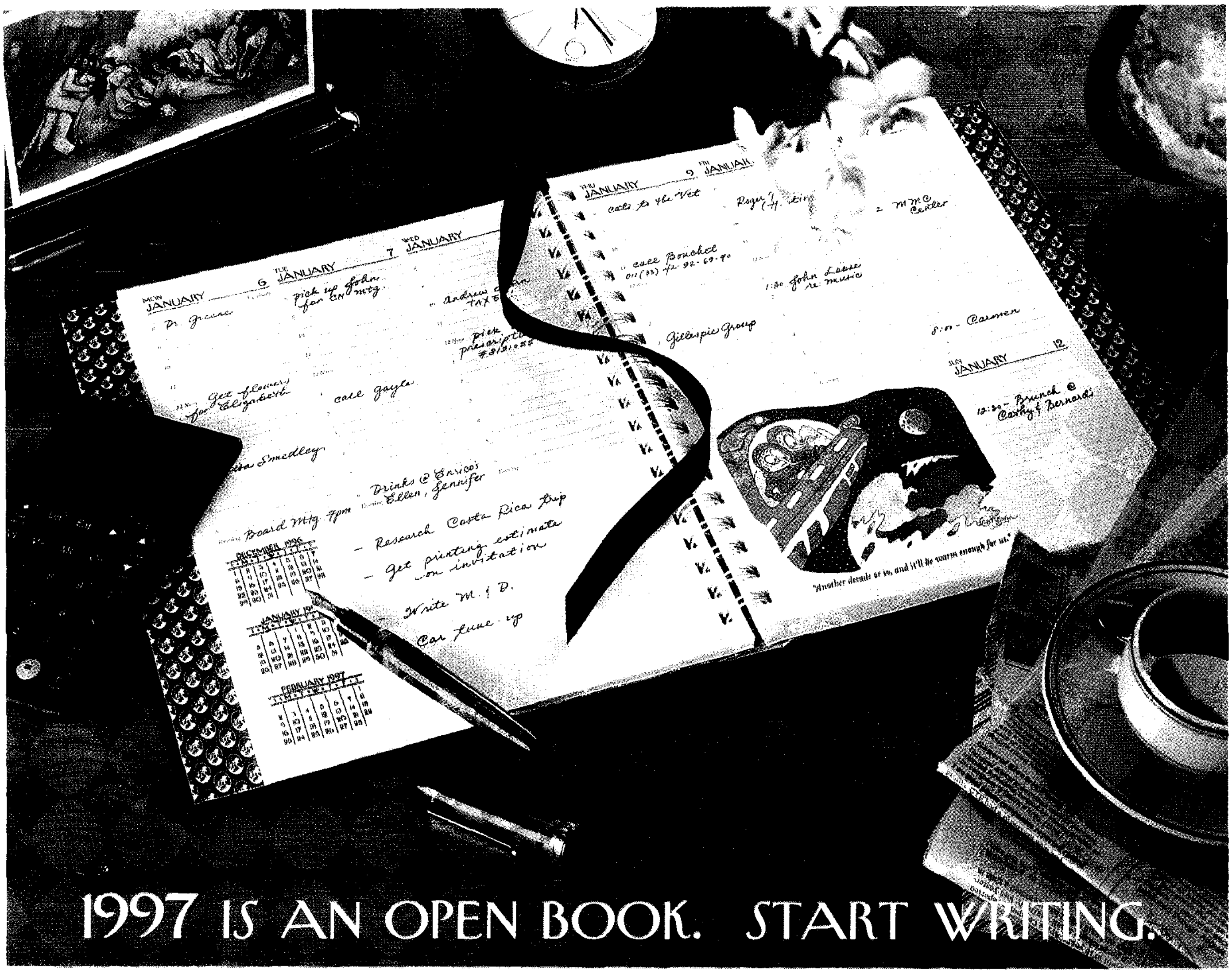
ELIZA GRAN



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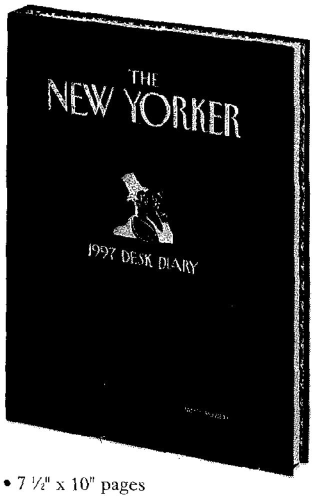

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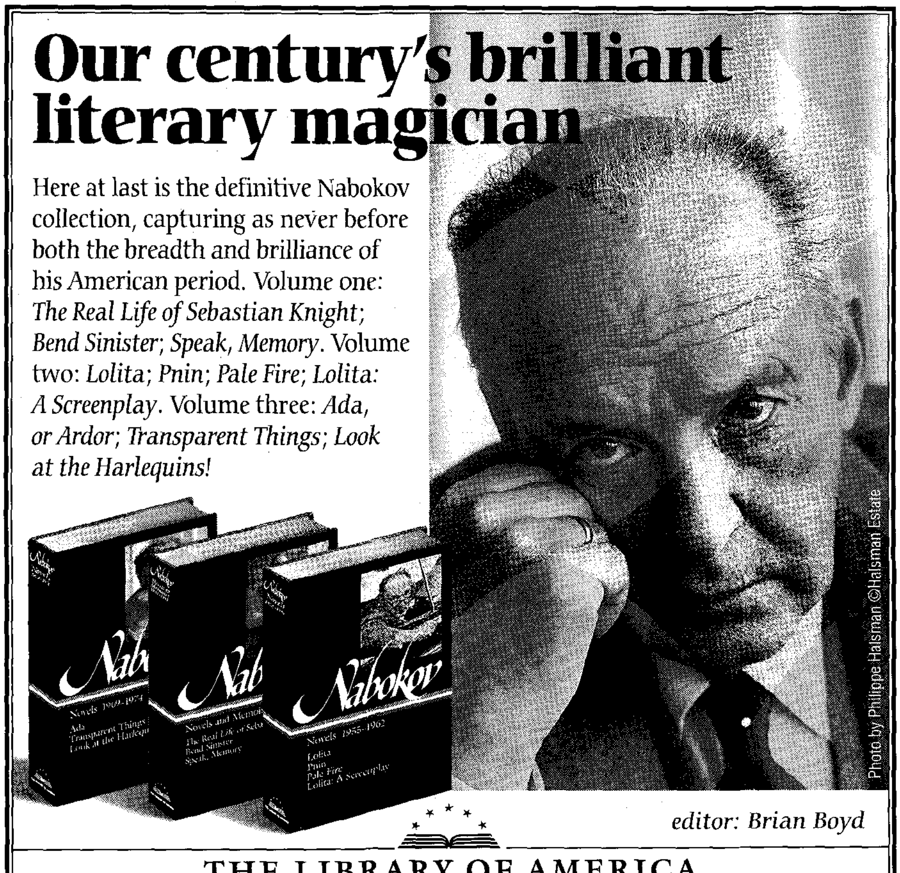

Our century's brilliant literary magician

Here at last is the definitive Nabokov collection, capturing as never before both the breadth and brilliance of his American period. Volume one: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight; Bend Sinister; Speak, Memory.* Volume two: *Lolita; Pnin; Pale Fire; Lolita: A Screenplay.* Volume three: *Ada, or Ardor; Transparent Things; Look at the Harlequins!*

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editor: Brian Boyd

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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

ANGEL FACE (1953)—Its sole distinction is that it manages to be simplistic, hokey, and chichi all at once. Jean Simmons plays the title character, a girl who dotes on her novelist father (Herbert Marshall) and hates her wealthy, businesslike stepmother (Barbara O'Neill); Robert Mitchum is cast as a doofus hunk, an ambulance driver and sports-car expert who knows Simmons is trouble but gets tangled up with her anyway. The notion that a pretty young lady can do ugly things is supposed to be chilling, but the filmmakers make up and light Simmons so unflatteringly that most of the time she looks like Dracula's daughter. With Mona Freeman as Mitchum's ex-lover, Kenneth Tobey as his ex-partner, and Leon Ames as a slick, aggressive defense attorney. Otto Preminger directed, from a script by Frank S. Nugent and Oscar Millard, based on a story by Chester Erskine.—M.S. (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 11.)

THE BROTHERS RICO (1957)—A primitive, absorbing, meat-and-potatoes—make that spaghetti-and-meatballs—gangster movie. Richard Conte has the lead, as a former Mafia accountant gone legit; James Darren and Paul Picerni are his brothers, who drag him back down into the underworld when they run afoul of the mob. For too long, the hero stupidly insists on believing in honor among killers and thieves—a naïveté that threatens the movie's life nearly as much as his siblings'. But the director, Phil Karlson, is brutally unsentimental, not naïve, and he brings off the shopworn material with brio. The supporting players are a lively bunch—especially Lamont Johnson, as Darren's stiff-necked, righteous brother-in-law; Harry Bellaver, as a California Mafioso; and Rudy Bond, as Bellaver's right-hand man. Screenplay by Lewis Meltzer and Ben Perry, from Georges Simenon's novel "Les Frères Rico."—M.S. (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 12.)

HIS DOUBLE LIFE (1933)—One of several movie versions of Arnold Bennett's "Buried Alive." This time, that nimble actor Roland Young is the shy, world-famous artist who is delighted to be thought dead in order to escape the annoyances of fame and settle down with genteel, middle-class Lillian Gish. The whimsey palls. Directed by Arthur Hopkins.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 14.)

THE SHANGHAI GESTURE (1941)—Hilariously, awesomely terrible. Josef von Sternberg packed the orgiastic, smoky atmosphere of John Colton's old melodrama about night-life depravities in Shanghai with crowds of coolies, diplomats, roulette players, and "bird-cage" girls, and in the foreground he put one of the most ridiculous casts ever assembled. Victor Mature, in a burnous—his eyes welling with mysterious passions—is worth the price of admission, and when you throw in Gene Tierney, as a rich girl going to the dogs, you've got a gorgeous travesty. Some of this effect is probably intentional, but the total effect couldn't have been.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 13.)

VERTIGO (1958)—It's almost as if you've never seen it before, because you've never *heard* it before. The new print of the ultimate cult movie—Hitchcock's voluptuous exploration of *l'amour feu*—gives the original musical tracks a state-of-the-art presentation that extracts previously hidden undertones and highlights from Bernard Herrmann's brilliant score. Of the composer's eight collaborations with Hitchcock (including "Psycho"), this is the most complex: he deploys everything from a habanera to a *valse macabre* to illuminate the morbid romanticism at the movie's core. With soaring visual eloquence (a unique mixture of the mist-draped and the hard-edged), Hitchcock takes voyeurism and amorous fixation to audacious, almost necrophiliac lengths in this tale of a retired San Francisco police detective (James Stewart) investigating an acquaintance's wife (Kim Novak) to find out whether she is spiritually possessed. Despite its misshapen form and its languor (Stewart crosses a hotel room in the time it took for him to race across London in "The Man Who Knew Too Much"), the movie is hypnotic and gloriously operatic—not a conventional masterpiece but an auteur classic, flooded with the Master's erotic and moral obsessions. Stewart's character is acrophobic, and when Hitchcock links the hero's vertigo to his sexual vulnerability, the result *is* dizzying. The awkwardness of the mystery adds to the film's sense that life is a puzzle with a piece missing. Stewart and Novak match up marvellously: he brings out all of his tortured Everyguy's clammy excitement, and she is fiercely, exhilaratingly physical, even when her character is enigmatic. Barbara Bel Geddes is touching as the film's one sane character—who's hopelessly out of her depth. Alec Coppel and Samuel Taylor wrote the script, from the novel "D'Entre les Morts," by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. The movie, too, has been revived from death, thanks to the restoration team of Robert A. Harris and James C. Katz, who have given it a clarity and lustre that it's lacked for thirty-eight years.—M.S. (Ziegfeld.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

New York Film Festival—The annual festival of recent international films. At **alice tully hall:** Oct. 9 at 6 and Oct. 10 at 9: "Three Lives and Only One Death" (see Current Films). . . . Oct. 9 at 9: "Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask" (Isaac Julien, United Kingdom) and "Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt" (Michal Goldman, United States). . . . Oct. 10 at 6 and Oct. 12 at 11:30: "Gabbeh" (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Iran). . . . Oct. 11 at 6 and Oct. 12 at midnight: "Lilies" (John Greyson, Canada). . . . Oct. 11 at 9 and Oct. 12 at 2: "Suburbia" (Richard Linklater, United States). . . . Oct. 12 at 5: "Mandela" (Jo Menell and Angus Gibson, United States). . . . Oct. 12 at 8: "Underground" (Emir Kusturica, France and Germany). . . . **avery fisher hall:** Oct. 13 at 8:30: "The People vs. Larry Flynt" (Milos Forman, United States). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A program of films by Kenji Mizoguchi; all films in Japanese, with English subtitles. Oct. 9: "My Love Has Been Burning" (1949) and "The Love of the Actress Sumako" (1947). . . . Oct. 10-12: "The Story of Last Chrysanthemums" (1939). . . . Oct. 13: "The Loyal 47 Ronin" (1942). . . . From Oct. 15: "Women of the Night" (1948) and "Victory of Women" (1946). . . . ¶ Oct. 14: "Love 'Em & Leave 'Em" (1926, Frank Tuttle; silent), with Louise Brooks, and "It" (1927, Clarence Badger; silent), with Clara Bow.

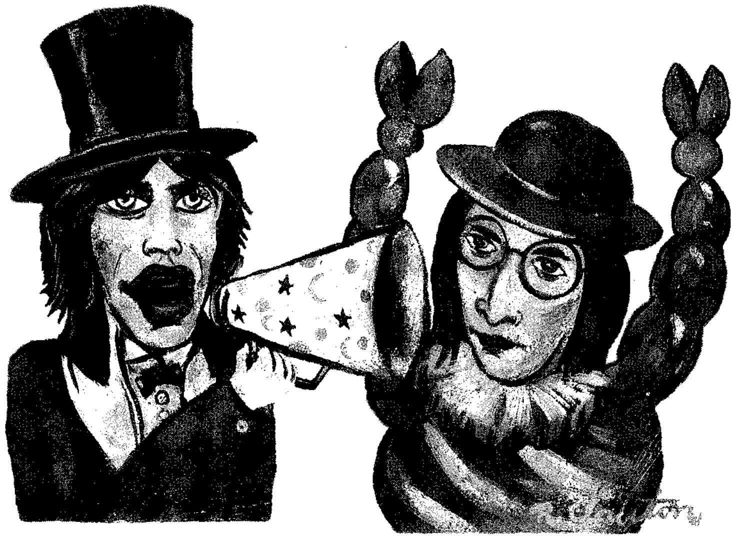
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Films from the Cinémathèque Française, Musée du Cinéma, Paris. Oct. 10 at 2:30: "The Cold Deck" (1917, William S. Hart) and "Braveheart" (1925, Alan Hale; French intertitles). . . . Oct. 10 at 8:15 and Oct. 13 at 2: "La Malibran" (1944, Sacha Guitry; in French). . . . Oct. 11 at 2:30: "Devil in Town" (1924, Germain Dulac; French intertitles). . . . Oct. 11 at 6 and Oct. 13 at 5: "The Woman and the Puppet" (1929, Jacques de Baroncelli; French intertitles). . . . Oct. 11 at 8: "Du Côté de Robison" (1964) and "Le Père Noël A les Yeux Bleus" (1967), both by Jean Eustache, in French. . . . Oct. 12 at 2: "The Steel Beast" (1935, Willy Otto Zielke; in German, with French subtitles). . . . Oct. 12 at 5 and Oct. 15 at 2:30: "Inner Scar" (1971, Philippe Garrel; in English, French, and German) and "Méditerranée" (1963, Jean-Daniel Pollet; in French). . . . Oct. 14 at 5: "The Family Honor" (1920, King Vidor; French intertitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 10-13: A program of films from New Day Films. . . . ¶ Oct. 14 at 2: "His Double Life" (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Films directed by Ritwik Ghatak (1925-76). Oct. 9 at 4 and Oct. 11 at 4, 6:30, and 9: "Reason, Debate and a Story" (1974). . . . Oct. 9 at 6:30 and 9: "A River Called Titash" (1972). . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 6, 10, and midnight and Oct. 13 at 2, 4, 6, and 8: "The Rolling Stones' Rock and Roll Circus" (1996, Michael Lindsay-Hogg) . . . . ¶ Oct. 14 at 2, 4, and 6: "Combination Platter" (1993, Tony Chan; in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Oct. 15 at 7: "Sullivan's Travels" (1941, Preston Sturges). . . . Oct. 15 at 8:45: "The Story of a Cheat" (1936, Sacha Guitry; in French), with Guitry.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Oct. 10-13 at 8: Four different programs of films by Alain Fleischer. . . . ¶ A program of film noir. Oct. 11 at 4 and 8: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1946, Tay Garnett) and "Angel Face" (†). . . . Oct. 12 at 4 and 8: "The Brothers Rico" (†) and "Underworld U.S.A." (1961, Sam Fuller). . . . Oct. 13 at 4 and 8: "Pushover" (1954, Richard Quine) and "The Shanghai Gesture" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Oct. 12 at 2: "King Creole" (1958, Michael Curtiz). . . . Oct. 12 at 4:30: "Blue Hawaii" (1961, Norman Taurog). . . . Oct. 13 at 2: "Barefoot in the Park" (1967, Gene Saks).



At the Walter Reade Theatre, Mick Jagger and John Lennon in Michael Lindsay-Hogg's "The Rolling Stones' Rock and Roll Circus."

ROB CLAYTON

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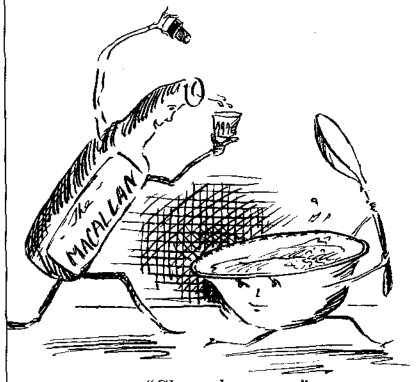

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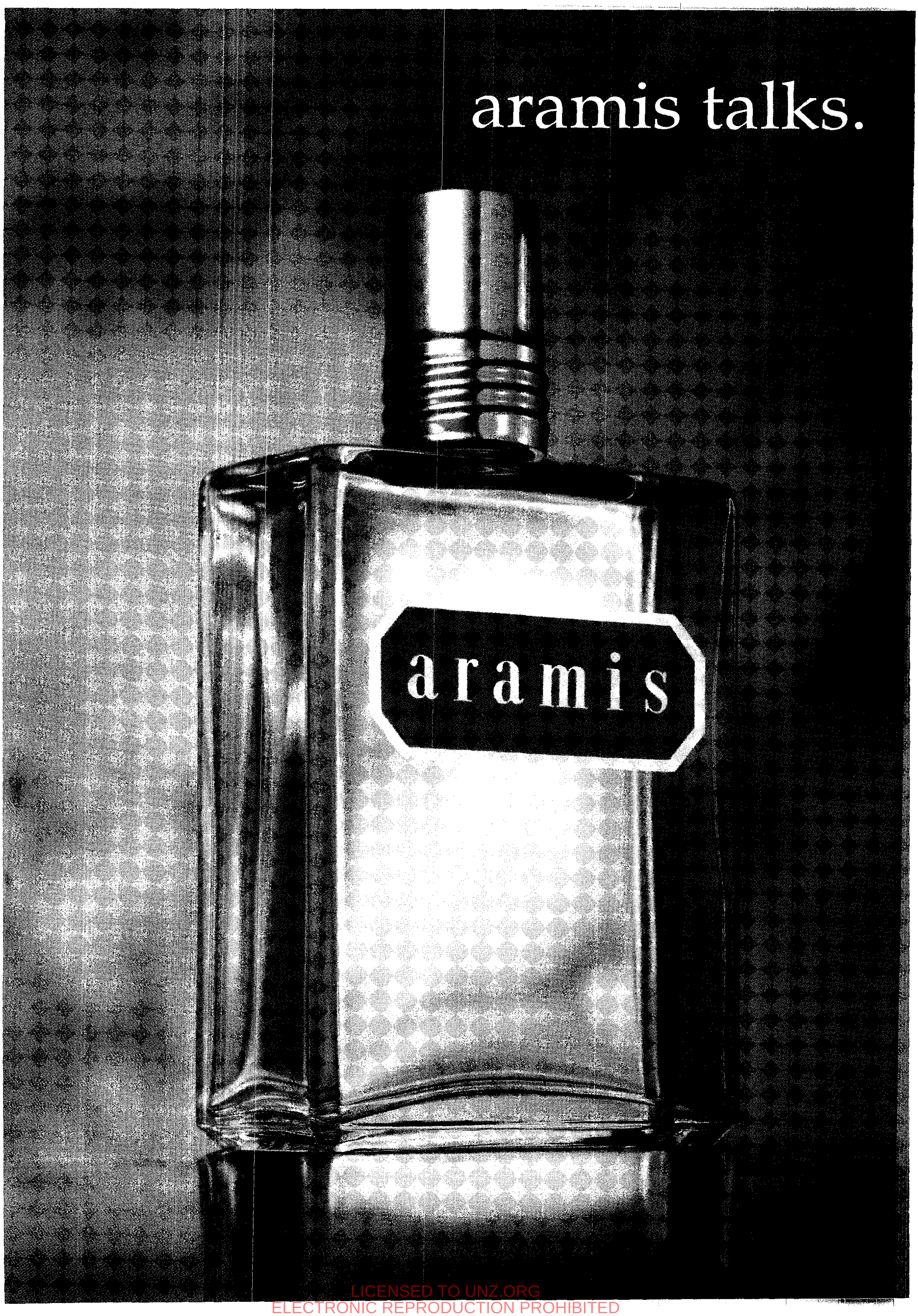
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE ARCHITECT OF FOUR MORE YEARS

Bruce Reed

Last October, Bruce Reed, a White House domestic-policy adviser and the building's most devout New Democrat, was handed a task that tested even his capacity for the suspension of disbelief: coming up with an agenda for a second Clinton term. At the time, Reed recalled the other day, the Republican revolution had yet to implode and the President's position was still deeply perilous. "*Time* did this tiny blurb about my getting the job," he said with a grin. "And the headline was 'WHY NO ONE ON EARTH ENVIES BRUCE REED.' "

A year later, Reed's labors have proved to be neither as hypothetical nor as thankless as they once seemed. Reed helped to produce many of the modest proposals of the Clinton campaign, from merit scholarships and adoption tax credits to nighttime curfews in big cities; it was he, as much as anybody in the White House, who put flesh on the centrist political skeleton erected by Dick Morris. Now, with Clinton poised to become the first Democratic President since Franklin Roosevelt to win reëlection, and with any number of senior officials rumored to be leaving, Reed is likely to play an even larger role in helping his boss address what may be the overriding political question of the next four years: Clinton's "permanent campaign" finally over, what kind of President would he be?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

For Reed, a thirty-six-year-old from Idaho with the countenance of a slightly wizened choirboy, the answer is an article of faith. Almost since the day he arrived in Washington, in 1985, Reed has been in the vanguard of the New Democratic cadre. After working as a speechwriter for Al Gore, in 1990 he became policy director of the movement's fountainhead, the Democratic Leadership Council, and grew close to Clinton, the group's incoming chairman. A year later, Reed was at the center of Clinton's fledgling Presidential campaign: running its policy shop, drafting many of its defining "third way" speeches, and, late one night, devising the pledge to "end welfare as we know it."

At the White House, however, Reed's fortunes have fluctuated—to the point where his status has often seemed a barometer for Clinton's inconstant fealty to the New Democratic cause. In the first two years, Reed despaired. He worked in the shadow of the health-care debacle (he still shares office space with the plan's point man, Ira Magaziner) and warred with his more liberal peers on the Administration's welfare-reform task force. (One of them, the Harvard academic David Ellwood, derided him as a "right-wing hack.") But, after the 1994 elections, Clinton's glide to the right pulled Reed back in from the margins. Reed's pen was evident in this year's State of the Union Message and in Clinton's speech to the Democratic Convention, and he was the main author of the Party platform—all decidedly New Democratic tracts. He was behind an array of culturally conservative executive orders and, along with Morris, was the most ardent voice urging the President to sign the G.O.P. welfare bill.

Reed insists that there are strong reasons to believe that Clinton's second term would resemble the past two years more than the first two. For one thing, whatever the partisan makeup of Congress, the majority in each chamber is likely to be slight, so coöperation seems unavoidable. For another, congressional Democrats, whom Reed believes dragged Clinton to the left initially, are "running on an agenda that's just about identical to ours." He says, "The country's headed toward a balanced budget. And on social issues, more and more Democrats have come to realize that it's O.K. for Democrats to do things for families—that these aren't just Republican issues."

Yet the Democratic Party still has many critics of Reed's brand of centrism. In the Party's more traditional quarters, where the D.L.C. has long been mocked as "Democrats for the Leisure Class," there remains the suspicion that Clinton and the New Democrats are less interested in a "new progressivism," as they claim, than in a soft-focus Republicanism. Already, several potential Democratic House chairmen, such as New York's Charles Rangel, have publicly expressed a lack of enthusiasm for a balanced budget, and a new, lefty rival to the D.L.C., the Campaign for America's Future, has issued a platform that includes planks with such titles as "Corporations Must Be Held Accountable."

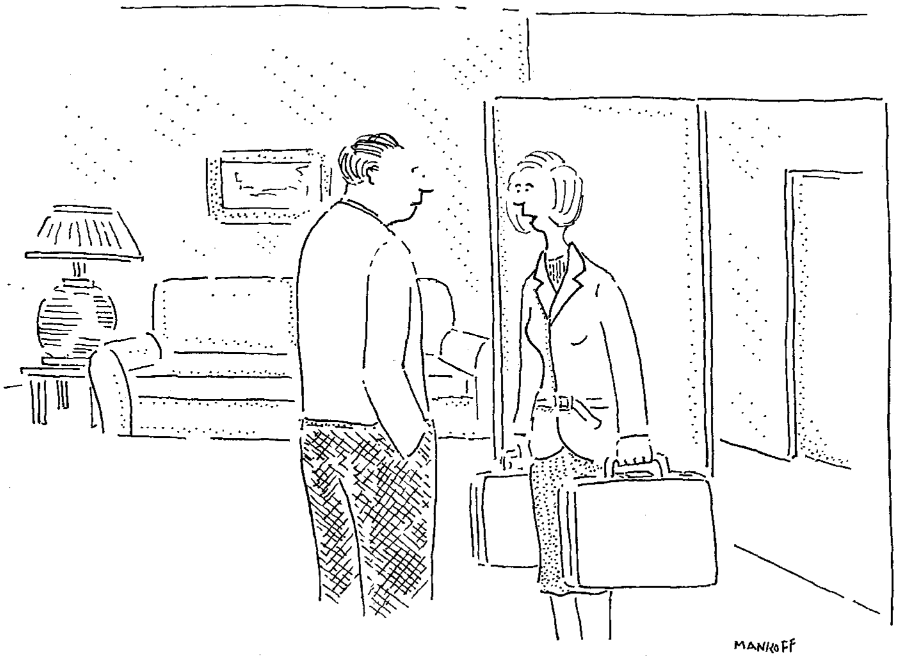
Then there is the matter of Clinton himself. Bob Dole's dire warnings that a post-election Clinton would reveal himself as a "liberal, liberal, liberal" may ring almost comically false, but there is some question about whether a President who once ridiculed his Administration for turning into "Eisenhower Republicans," and whose desire to leave a legacy of historic proportions is palpable, would be content to conduct policy by safe increments. Naturally, Reed has an answer at hand. In a second term, he said, Clinton would focus first on balancing the budget. As in his second term in Arkansas, he would push for education reform—for greater financial assistance for college-bound students, for charter schools, for higher standards, for making fourteen years of education the norm. And he would deal with the fallout from welfare reform, in part by fixing the anti-immigrant elements of the law (which caused him privately to call it "a decent welfare bill wrapped in a sack of shit") and in part by encouraging business to make sure there are jobs for those who have been cut from the rolls.

"Those are big things, difficult things," Reed said, and then he proceeded to rattle off a long list of smaller things, suitable for keeping an activist President occupied in a time of fiscal constraint. Speaking with great enthusiasm, he described a Justice Department directive to cities to establish 911-style phone numbers for community policing. "Because it's not controversial and doesn't cost lots of money, and we didn't spend two years arguing about it, people assume it can't mean much," he said. "The problem with some Old Democrats is that they tend to view the whole New Democratic approach as a tactic rather than as a philosophy." The next four years may finally prove whether, in truth, Clinton views that approach any differently.

SOMERSAULTS

AROUND this time two years ago, shortly before winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Japanese novelist Kenzaburo Oe made a startling announcement: he was going to give up writing fiction forever. He said that he had been writing in order to give his brain-damaged son, Hikari, a voice; many of his novels have characters with disabilities similar to his son's. But Hikari, who is now a successful composer, had found a voice of his own. "Besides, I have been writing for almost forty years now, and I thought I had worked enough and earned a rest," Oe said the other day.

Recently, though, Oe, the author of more than twenty-five novels, including "A Personal Matter" and "The Silent Cry," has been writing a new one. Some of its themes will echo previous works, and he expects it to be his longest by far. On a rainy Sunday, in a modest restaurant near the train station in Princeton, where he is teaching this year, Oe's famously perpendicular ears flew proudly above a collarless azure shirt, and his famously impish grin flashed frequently as he described the book. He had put down his pen in the middle of a homosexual seduction scene. "So I have left my characters at a very critical moment," he said. "There is an artist, a man in his sixties—he is famous for developing arts education in Japan, but he is teaching at an American university—and he is about to have an affair with a young terrorist who belongs to a religious cult. The artist is painting a picture of Jonah, the Old Testament character, using this terrorist as a model, and he is looking at his beautiful young body and wondering how he is going to proceed."



"It's pro-active, Stan. I'm leaving you before *you become a midlife male sleazeball creep."*

"I already have the title," Oe went on. "It will be called 'Somersault.' I got the idea while reading about a man called Shabbetai Tzevi, who proclaimed himself a Messiah and was arrested in Constantinople in the seventeenth century. You know, many people expected a Messiah in 1666. The Ottomans arrested Tzevi, and he apostatized instantly—converted from Judaism to Islam, wore a turban and all. But some of his followers continued to believe he was the Messiah and decided that his apostasy must somehow be part of his mission." (Oe considers the cult leader in his novel a kind of modern-day apostate.)

As for Oe's own somersault, he said that he began to reconsider his decision to give up fiction last February, after the death of Toru Takemitsu, Japan's best-known composer and one of his closest friends. "I had been to visit him in the hospital. And when we talked about my decision he didn't condemn it directly, but he gave me a very peculiar smile—sad and a little bit malicious. I spoke at his funeral, and they played some music he had written called 'Rain Tree,' inspired by stories of mine. I kept thinking of that smile and what it meant. When I first came to Princeton, I was going from my office to my apartment, and there are three rain trees on the way. So I sat down under one of them, and I saw that smile of Takemitsu's, like the Cheshire Cat's. And I knew that the only way I could stand up before his spirit was to write novels again."

A RUN FOR THE MONEY

JOSEPH SIMMONS has long been a few steps ahead of his time. In the early eighties, years before the mainstream explosion of rap, he was leading the legendary group Run D.M.C. (He was Run.) In the mid-nineties, before hip-hop's recent battles of conscience, he excised sinful excess from his life and became an ordained minister. Now, though, Run may be playing catch-up. As the attitude and narratives of the hip-hop generation have begun to invade Broadway, through "Bring In da Noise, Bring In da Funk" and "Rent," Simmons is readying a new play about his own life, starring himself and titled "Reverend Run."

One bright afternoon a short ways back, in the outdoor section of the downtown chill spot Time Café, Simmons, who is thirty-one, sat with his older brother (by seven years) Russell, the Hugh Hefner of hip-hop. Both of them are bald and golden-skinned, and they wore bright-colored clothes from the line owned by the secular Simmons. As Run asked his twelve-year-old daughter, seated across the table, to take her younger sister and brother to the bathroom, Russell rambled on about women, pointing out that while Run has five children he himself doesn't have any kids, unless you count his last girlfriend, who, he offered cheerfully, was nineteen.

Run's play, which he will co-produce and which is slated to open next spring, will begin with a Run D.M.C. concert and move on to Run's raucous life backstage (though not his 1991 indictment for rape; the case was thrown out of court) and his transformation. "I go to church and talk to God," Run said. "Like, 'Wassup, God? I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing now.' " Skeptics may ask if, in putting his life story on Broadway, Run is interested more in the Almighty or the almighty dollar, but he is unconcerned. "The Bible says that God has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants," Run said. "I got two Mercedes-Benzes! I got a mansion in Queens! God would never want you to say, 'I made millions of dollars, and now I'm just gonna be broke for Jesus.' All the Bible characters were paid beyond belief."

Run paused as his three children returned and took their seats. "The Bible doesn't say money is the root of all evil," he continued. "It says the *love* of money. I'm down with God! And I'm paid! Guess why. My God is good! I'm *definitely*," he said, as though he were a boxing announcer, "the *illustrious . . . millionaire . . . Reverend* Run." He turned to his flute-thin twelve-year-old. "Tell him how we live, Vanessa."

"Good," she said blankly.

"How good?"

"Very good," she answered, still blank.

"What do we have in our house?"

"Jacuzzi."

"What else?"

"Sauna." She might have been calling out bingo numbers.

"And she's a tither, too," Run said proudly. He turned to her and asked, "If I gave you five dollars right now, what would you give to the church tomorrow?"

"Fifty cents," Vanessa said on cue.

The Reverend beamed.

ABSOLUTELY ARNOLD

Arnold Scaasi and friends

EVERYBODY pretty much freaked when they got invitations to the gala opening of the retrospective honoring the couture designer Arnold Scaasi. Talk about not knowing what to wear! Ladies were advised to come in their very own Scaasi gowns. Fine, but what if you didn't happen to *have* your very own Scaasi? Or what if you have one that you bought in 1983 but can't fit into anymore? Or what if you have your very own multi-thousand-dollar Scaasi but you've loaned it for exhibit in the retrospective? In that case, you'd better have a fallback—that is, another Scaasi gown. Otherwise, you should probably stay home.

Liz Smith had loaned her circa-1986 Scaasi Shocking-pink jersey dress with a yellow satin seven-eighths Ottoman jacket encrusted with crystals. Therefore, at the gala, which was last Monday at the New-York Historical Society, Smith was wearing one of her fallback Scaasis—an off-the-shoulder black-lace-and-red-taffeta tight-waisted, full-skirted number that was rather va-va-voom. During the reception, she parked in front of the mannequin who was wearing her clothes. "That's my dress," she said to anyone passing by. A sprightly blonde wearing a gold-embroidered long-sleeved, short-skirted Scaasi stopped to chat. Liz Smith pointed to the Liz Smith mannequin and said, "Look! That's my dress! I just love it! I *love* it!"

"Lovely," Gold Embroidered said, nodding.

"It was such a *rag* when I gave it to Arnold," Smith continued. "I wore it a *lot*." She fingered a bit of the fabric.

"You're not supposed to touch anything on display," someone behind her said.

"It's *mine*," Smith responded. "I can touch it as much as I want." She turned back to Gold Embroidered, glanced at her hemline, and said, "Oh, I like your mini look!"

"Thank you," Gold said. "It was from Arnold's mini period."

Since 1956, Arnold Scaasi has been designing luxurious dress-up clothes for women who like to dress up. A pretty gown he made for Mamie Eisenhower to wear at a state dinner for the President of Colombia is in the exhibit; a dignified lady wearing many, many emeralds had on the same gown at the party. Barbara Bush's Inaugural blue velvet-and-satin glamorous-grandmother gown was there, among the two hundred-plus pieces, and Barbara Bush the person was there, too, wearing one of *her* fallback Scaasi gowns, shaking hands in the receiving line for a half hour or so. Kitty Carlisle Hart was there in a black-lace Scaasi. She had chosen it over her gigantic poufy thing of Scaasi's that was spending the evening at home. "I just didn't know what to wear," she said with a sigh. "This dress is good and my other one's good, but the other might have been a little . . . *much*."

Arnold Scaasi himself was wearing a tux. "I love the Historical Society, and I'm so happy the exhibition is here," he said. Would he have wanted it at the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum? "Oh, *no!*" Scaasi gasped. "You have to be *dead* to be in the Met." ◆

"The Architect of Four More Years," John Heilemann; "Somersaults," Lindsley Cameron; "A Run for the Money," Touré; "Absolutely Arnold," Susan Orlean.

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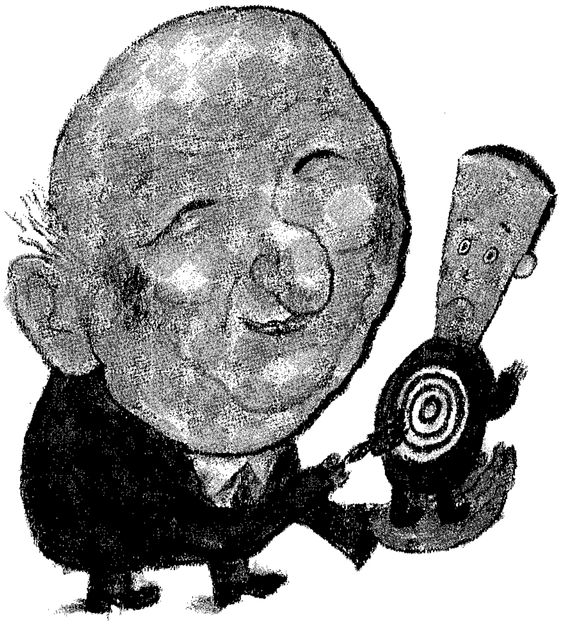
GET RUDY

How worried should Mayor Giuliani be by the terrible things Ed Koch keeps saying about him?

BY JAMES TRAUB

EDWARD I. KOCH, the former mayor of New York, has been out of office for seven years, but, to his own immense gratification, he seems almost as vivid a presence in the city's life now as he was when he held forth daily from City Hall. While New York's three other living ex-mayors—John V. Lindsay, Abe Beame, and David Dinkins—have contented themselves with a decent obscurity, Koch has evolved into a human juggernaut of opinion, reaching the public through a daily radio call-in show—"This is Ed Koch, your voice of reason"—a weekly column in the *Post*, a weekly movie review in six neighborhood papers ("Trainspotting": "sick and degenerate, and anyone who liked it needs help"), weekly segments on Bloomberg Information Television, and other frequent appearances on television and in the press. And Koch, as always, has views on everything—the Middle East peace process, welfare reform, the destruction of frozen embryos in Great Britain. In his eighth and latest book, "Murder on Broadway," which is a mystery written with Wendy Corsi Staub, he even offers a recipe for the perfect cup of coffee—Martinson's from the can, very hot, very strong, and black. Koch has the charm that comes with naïve self-love: nobody could be as heartily entertained by his opinions as he himself is.


The usually playful Koch has become obsessed.

In recent months, however, the Kochian enterprise has become strangely dark and humorless and single-minded. The ex-mayor has become as fanatically obsessed as Captain Ahab, and his Moby-Dick is New York's current mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, whom Koch endorsed in 1993. Koch has been lashing into Mayor Giuliani with a vindictive fury that seems very much out of character for a man who has always viewed politics as performance art. Not long ago, he spent nearly twenty minutes on the twenty-four-hour local cable news channel NY1 attempting to document his claim that Giuliani is a liar and a "killer." He raised serious issues, such as the Mayor's handling of Ramon Cortines, the former schools chancellor, and William Bratton, the former police commissioner; he also commented on such passing irritants as the statement on Giuliani's home page that he was responsible for "the City's first balanced budget in twenty years." Koch said, "He *knows* in fact that that isn't true." (He himself balanced *ten* budgets, the former mayor says.) No matter that the statement had been corrected, Koch was not mollified. Koch then listed various Democrats who he felt could beat, or even "smash," the Mayor if only they would enter the race. The interviewer, Dominic Carter, asked the former mayor why he was so bitter. "I'm not *bitter*," Koch said. "When I comment, it's basically on the news of the day."

That last remark could be classified as a rare instance of Kochian modesty were it not so plainly disingenuous. In fact,

AHMET GÖRGÜN

Koch is more nearly ubiquitous, better connected, and more influential than any other commentator in New York. He claims that his support was critical both to Giuliani's victory over David Dinkins in 1993 and to Dinkins's over Giuliani in 1989, and he may be right, if only because in both elections the margin was so tiny. An ordinary commentator might call on hesitant candidates to run; Koch has engaged in a tireless campaign of recruitment.

And Koch has succeeded in altering the political atmosphere. Leland Jones, who worked as a Koch spokesman for six years (and who now advises Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, a likely Giuliani challenger), says, "Most of the movers and shakers in this city see Rudy Giuliani as invincible. What Koch does, if nothing else, is to bring Giuliani down a dozen or so pegs and make him a mere mortal, like every other politician in town." Koch's dudgeon has the potential to upset Giuliani's electoral calculus. The 1997 election could well be a replay of 1989 and 1993, with two unshakably committed blocs and a small contingent of undecided voters in the middle, and many of those will be the sort of voters who are likely to pay attention to the opinions of Edward I. Koch.

To listen to Koch on his morning radio show is to hear once again the wisecracking uncle and shtick artist who kept New York entertained and occasionally ulcerated for twelve years. Everything is the same: the high-pitched, grating voice; the hectoring tone; the perpetual sense of amazement at the depths of human folly. One morning, a caller was foolish enough to differ with Koch on the merits of Clinton's proposal to expand federal wiretapping authority.

Koch: "So, you're against it?"

Caller: "I'm against wiretapping completely."

Koch: "Oh, stop it—'completely.' Would you say that if your son was kidnapped? . . . Tell me yes or no." When the caller protested weakly that Koch was talking about a clearly criminal situation, Koch finished him off. "Bye-bye. . . . This is Ed Koch, your voice of reason."

Another day, on President Clinton's decision to sign the welfare bill:

Koch: "I think that President Clinton, when he signs this bill, if he looks up into the air, he's gonna see his soul leaving his body."

Caller: "I don't agree."

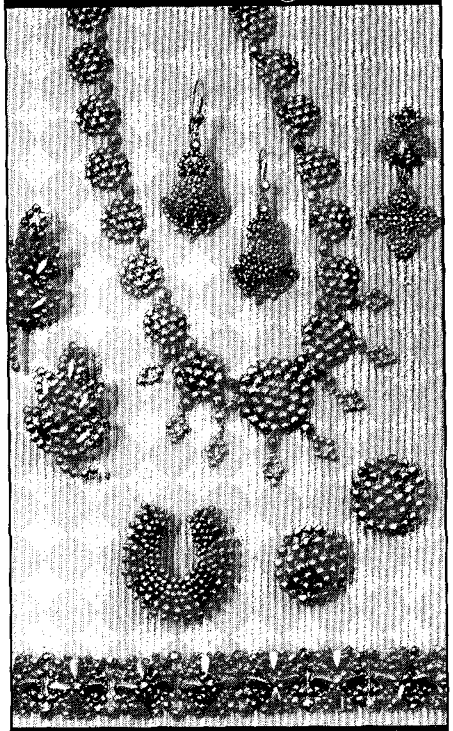
Koch: "You don't agree. O.K. You like the show?"

Caller: "Excuse me?"

I had lunch with Koch in late summer, and though we had met before, I was again surprised at how tall and broad-shouldered he is; he's a big man with a small man's personality. Koch is seventy-one, and age seems to have made him larger rather than smaller: his pink, bald, squarish head, always an attractive target for caricaturists, has taken on monumental proportions. He looks as if he were ready for some Jewish Mt. Rushmore.

Once Koch had ordered lunch—two appetizers and a glass of orange juice, in keeping with a diet he follows off and on—he embarked on a chronological account of his relations with Mayor Giuliani. In the last days of the 1994 gubernatorial election, he said, the press reported that police officers in a Brooklyn neighborhood had torn down signs posted on public property by supporters of George Pataki, the Republican challenger, though apparently not signs for Governor Mario Cuomo, whom the Mayor supported. When he said on his radio show that the signs should be put back, Koch recalled, Giuliani telephoned him at home and primly reminded him that the signs were illegal. Koch responded that he had, after all, passed the law himself. As Koch was about to go on, Giuliani said, "Don't interrupt me"—a demand that Koch makes several times a day on his radio show. And then he let the Mayor go on while he opened his mail. "About a half hour later," Koch says, "Bratton called me, and I said, 'You don't have to explain; the Mayor called me to explain and told me not to interrupt him.' " Bratton graciously said that Koch could interrupt anytime he wished.

The surface theme of this anecdote, which Koch has polished through continual retelling, is that Giuliani is arrogant and rude, and that Koch has a rather extravagant sense of wounded pride. There is, however, a thread of something more than personal running through it. What Koch had been about to say when the Mayor interrupted him was "That's a law that you enforce the day after the election." For Koch, who often says proudly that he stood for election approximately twenty-five times, putting up and tearing down posters is part of political life. As Koch saw it, in this case Giuliani was enforcing the law in a way that appeared to help his ally; he was playing the game



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while insisting that he was above it. "His vaunted administration, which is so nonpolitical, is as political as you can get," Koch says, with a sneer.

Still, Koch found it in him to support the Mayor who had famously interrupted him. But Koch began to entertain more serious doubts about Giuliani early the following year, when the Mayor embarked on a campaign of personal abuse and belittlement of Chancellor Cortines. At one point, Giuliani described Cortines as "precious." Cortines, like Koch, is a bachelor who has occasionally been dogged by rumors of homosexuality, and Koch says that he could not miss the "homophobic" overtones of Giuliani's critique. The attack on Cortines struck Koch as a simple act of bullying—not only cruel in itself but bizarre. Koch himself has always known better than to turn one of his innumerable adversaries into a martyr. Why would a politician put himself in such a bad light?

Koch believes that the people of New York find Giuliani as obnoxious as he does. "When I walk down the street, people smile," he said. "They want to say hello; they feel comfortable. I don't think they feel comfortable with Giuliani."

"You liked being liked," I said. "Maybe he doesn't care."

Koch looked at me as if I had informed him that the Mayor has two heads. "I think that's very wrong," he said. "*Everybody* cares."

Yet the central paradox of Giuliani's three years in office is this: by behaving in a way that many people find appalling, he has succeeded in changing the status quo where Koch and others could not—for example, in merging the city's three police forces, and in cracking down on crime in the city's wholesale markets. He has, in short, made New York City seem governable.

Koch himself was abrasive, but often to no purpose save that of entertainment; Giuliani has made intransigence seem like an indispensable political virtue. There is a view, in fact, that Koch's biggest problem with Giuliani is envy. Koch was content to adopt a tone of gracious condescension toward David Dinkins (Giuliani's predecessor and Koch's successor), whom Koch considered, as he puts it, "a very nice guy but a terrible mayor," clearly inferior to him. Koch could not patronize Giuliani, but neither could he serve as an elder statesman to the new administration, since Giuliani patently had little interest in his counsel.

Koch, too, had real accomplishments, especially in his first term, but he sees himself—and perhaps will be remembered—less as an agent of change than as an incarnation of the city and of its resilient spirit. Not only did he largely accept the existing political traditions and practices; he obviously enjoyed them. It's as if Koch were a Renaissance cardinal, cheerful and worldly and suffused with history (an analogy that is not so very absurd, given Koch's fondness for Catholic hymns and Irish cops), and Giuliani were Martin Luther sent by Heaven to topple the rotten old order. Giuliani is a man who is guided, and perhaps limited, by the idea of personal authority. On those many issues where confrontation is of little use—the schools, above all—he has made relatively little headway.

By early 1995, Koch was writing in the *Post*, "Rudy has reached the hubris stage in 14 months. It took me 12 years." Nevertheless, he went on to say, "I am one of Rudy's supporters. . . . His achievements in a very short time have been remarkable." This remained Koch's line until last December, when it was revealed that Giuliani would not reappoint two sitting Criminal Court judges, despite recommendations from his own advisory committee. The Mayor called the judges "marginal" and, with the committee's approval, appointed them instead to one-year terms on the Civil Court.

Koch considered his independent judicial screening panel to be one of his greatest achievements, and he saw Giuliani's act as a violation of its autonomy. He held a joint press conference with Dinkins to denounce the Mayor's decision, and he wrote to every committee member asking them to resign in protest. This was considered a remarkable act of chutzpah, since, as far as the committee was concerned, Giuliani had every right to ignore its recommendation. The committee's chairman, Paul Curran, wrote back to Koch, saying tartly, "The Mayor's decisions . . . were not based upon partisan political considerations. I regret I cannot say the same for your letter to me."

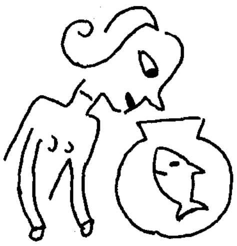
Koch's denunciation precipitated a spiral of self-righteousness. At Giuliani's daily press conference, he charged that the two former mayors had reappointed "a significant number of Democratic-machine politicians, despite their hypocritical allegiance to some pristine process." And then he quoted a line from a 1988 book, "City for Sale," to prove it. This was the lowest of all blows, and quite possibly a serious tactical error. The hero of this muckraking book, whose subtitle is "Ed Koch and the Betrayal of New York," is none other than Rudy Giuliani, the "priestly prosecutor" who pursues the bosses; the villain is, of course, Ed Koch, ally of the machine. These allegations, once common currency, had faded with time; Koch, the voice of reason, had spent the previous seven years blotting them out. The fact that Giuliani had revived the old machine imagery in connection with what Koch saw as his single greatest blow against the machine made the episode even more infuriating.

"It made him crazy," one of Koch's closest friends says. "The personal part of it was what really got him off the reservation." When I asked Koch about the example that Giuliani alluded to from "City for Sale," he said that it was irrelevant because it involved a candidate for an elective, rather than appointive, judgeship. "I have *never* been so incensed," Koch says. He then concluded that "character is fate, and I find that the flaws in his character are *huge*." Koch says this with a certain gloating satisfaction: it had taken Rudy Giuliani to turn Ed Koch into Sophocles.

Koch now turned from criticism to action. The conventional wisdom at the time was that none of the likely Democratic candidates had a serious chance of unseating Giuliani. Koch, however, has unique access to the world of conventional wisdom. He spends a good part of his day talking to the lobbyists and publicists and political pros and corporate types who once worked for or with him, and who now constitute the New York equivalent of "inside the Beltway." He began touting a list of Democrats who he claimed could beat the Mayor, including State Comptroller H. Carl McCall; City Comptroller Alan Hevesi; Public Advocate Mark Green, whom he had lambasted for years as an unreconstructed liberal; and even Queens District Attorney Richard Brown, a little-known figure who had shown scant interest in running for higher office. "I think he's encouraged anybody who is ambulatory to run" is how one of his friends puts it. And since that time Koch has banged away at the Mayor ceaselessly, not only directly but through his pipeline to the city's leading reporters and columnists. He has met with most of the would-be candidates themselves, and has had "two or three dinners," he told me, with William Bratton, who is said to be exploring a run. Koch also speaks regularly with David Garth, the strategist who ran his mayoral campaigns as well as Giuliani's most recent one. Garth has had serious differences with Giuliani, and it is far from clear that he will be running Giuliani's reëlection campaign.

KOCH says he cannot imagine changing his mind about Giuliani, but people who know him well are not convinced that the last word has been spoken. One of Koch's confidants says, "The junk yard is full of people he said he couldn't support, and then he turned around. As events changed, he changed." As yet, the Mayor has made no effort to bring Koch back into the fold, but that situation, too, may change as the election draws closer. Raymond Harding, the leader of the city's Liberal Party and a key Giuliani adviser, says of Koch, "There are two views on the damage. One is that Koch has gone so far beyond the line that he's hurting himself and his erstwhile credibility. The other is, this guy has his daily radio show, draws a respectable audience, he's got a column, he's got all this Koch, Inc.—a constant, unending drumbeat against Giuliani has got to do damage."

Democrats have recently been telling one another that the Mayor can be beaten. "Giuliani," says the political consultant Hank Morris, "has no margin for error, and he's made a lot of errors." Yet to date, Koch's recruitment campaign has not been a conspicuous success. The only Koch candidate who is thinking seriously about the race is Comptroller Hevesi, who would have to give up his office, and sure reëlection, to run. Hevesi has a history of backing away from that final step, however, and a poll released last week that showed him running fourteen points behind the Mayor is not likely to stiffen his resolve. (The Reverend Al Sharpton recently said that he is also considering entering the race against Giuliani.)



The fact that Koch is banking so heavily on the comptroller says something about the level of his anger and frustration. Hevesi is a fifty-six-year-old former state assemblyman from Queens who possesses very little of Koch's charisma or Giuliani's force of character. Koch didn't even endorse him in the 1993 comptroller's race. Hevesi is also a classic New York liberal, deeply tied to the city's major unions, and an outspoken opponent of the death penalty—which Koch favors.

On substantive matters, in fact, Koch is far closer to Giuliani than he is to most of the people on his list. Koch and Giuliani are both reformed liberals (Koch was a Stevenson man, Giuliani a McGovern supporter) who migrated to the right and then moved slightly back toward the center. Giuliani, like Koch, has largely succeeded in occupying the middle position in New York City. He has made it clear, through his comments on national Republican policy, that he is not a doctrinaire conservative. Indeed, Koch says that he will vote for Giuliani (though he will not endorse him) if no one joins the three Democratic candidates who have so far announced, or all but announced—Ruth Messinger, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, and City Councilman Sal Albanese. "Ruth is on the left, and a bridge too far," Koch says. "And I don't think Freddy Ferrer has the expertise and the talent to do the job that I would want done."

The interesting question is exactly how one of Ed Koch's middle-of-the-road candidates would campaign against Giuliani. Both Hevesi and McCall have criticized the Mayor sharply for failing to make the kind of cuts needed to balance the budget, but this is not a subject on which liberal Democrats have more credibility than moderate Republicans. Indeed, what principally distinguishes them from the Mayor is their belief in forms of public spending that the city currently can't afford.

Koch may be right in thinking that one of his chosen candidates can beat the Mayor by appealing to New Yorkers' sense of decency and by making a commitment to the kind of institutional reforms, in the schools and elsewhere, that the Mayor has ignored. But it's likely that the same people who smile at Koch on the street will vote for Giuliani. The Mayor may have convinced a majority of citizens that, at this moment in its history, New York needs a Martin Luther. And as for Cardinal Koch? "I think what I did is now in the history books," he said as lunch came to an end. "And I think history will treat me nicely." ♦

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LETTER FROM SAN FRANCISCO

THE AUTHOR VS. THE LIBRARY

When he asked to see the card catalogue, he found himself in the middle of a war over what the libraries of the future should be.

BY NICHOLSON BAKER

LAST year, I got a call from the Rochester Public Library, the library I used most as a child. They were getting rid of their card catalogue; I had written about card catalogues at some length in these pages. Did I want it? If I paid for shipping, they would mail it from Rochester to Berkeley, minus the cabinets, which had resale value. I said no, I didn't want it, I wanted them to keep it. So they threw it out.

This past April, I got some E-mail from a librarian at the San Francisco Public Library. The S.F.P.L. had just moved to a new building, and the press had responded with a prolonged celebration. Robert Hass, Poet Laureate, wrote that "the interior of the library is a marvel, so deeply delicious you forget your previous ideas of what a library is"; Allen Temko, formerly the architecture critic for the San Francisco *Chronicle*, likened its several inner bridges to "the visionary architecture of Piranesi." The S.F.P.L.'s administrators planned—as have many library administrators around the country, in the process of going on-line—to dispose of the cards from their catalogue and auction off the cabinets. But for now the catalogue still sat in the old building—an ornately carved summation of the contents of a great urban public library at the end of the Age of Paper, "frozen" (i.e., not filed into or updated) as of 1991. "You are probably the only one who can save it now," the librarian flatteringly wrote.

Because I felt I had shirked my duty as a preservationist in my home town, I agreed to try. In May, I made a formal request under the Public Records Act (California's version of the Federal Freedom of Information Act) to inspect the card catalogue. This legalistic démarche would, I hoped, define the catalogue as a public record, and temporarily prevent the administration from treating it as surplus property. My request was not unreasonable: the S.F.P.L.'s database-conversion project isn't finished, and there are thousands of cards in the catalogue for books currently held in closed-stack areas of the library which have no match yet in the on-line system. (More than half the library's collection now resides in closed, unbrowsable stacks.) My request was, however, denied, in a letter from the City Librarian, Kenneth E. Dowlin: "We are unable to allow this at this time."

So, inspired by the library's own letterhead, which reads, "Access, Discover, Empower," I sued for legal access. Late in June, eighteen drawers from the old card catalogue were brought over to the new building, where I was allowed to use them. Meanwhile, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors proposed and passed a nonbinding resolution "urging the Library Commission to preserve the card catalogue at the Main Library and make it available to the public." (On September 3rd, after hours of public testimony, the Library Commission voted to find a way to keep it.)

But by the time I was successfully looking up names like Walter Benjamin and John Milton on paper cards—and noticing that there were substantially fewer books in the on-line catalogue by these and other writers than there were in the card catalogue—I had spent more than a month talking to members of the library staff. I knew the real story, which is only incidentally about catalogues.

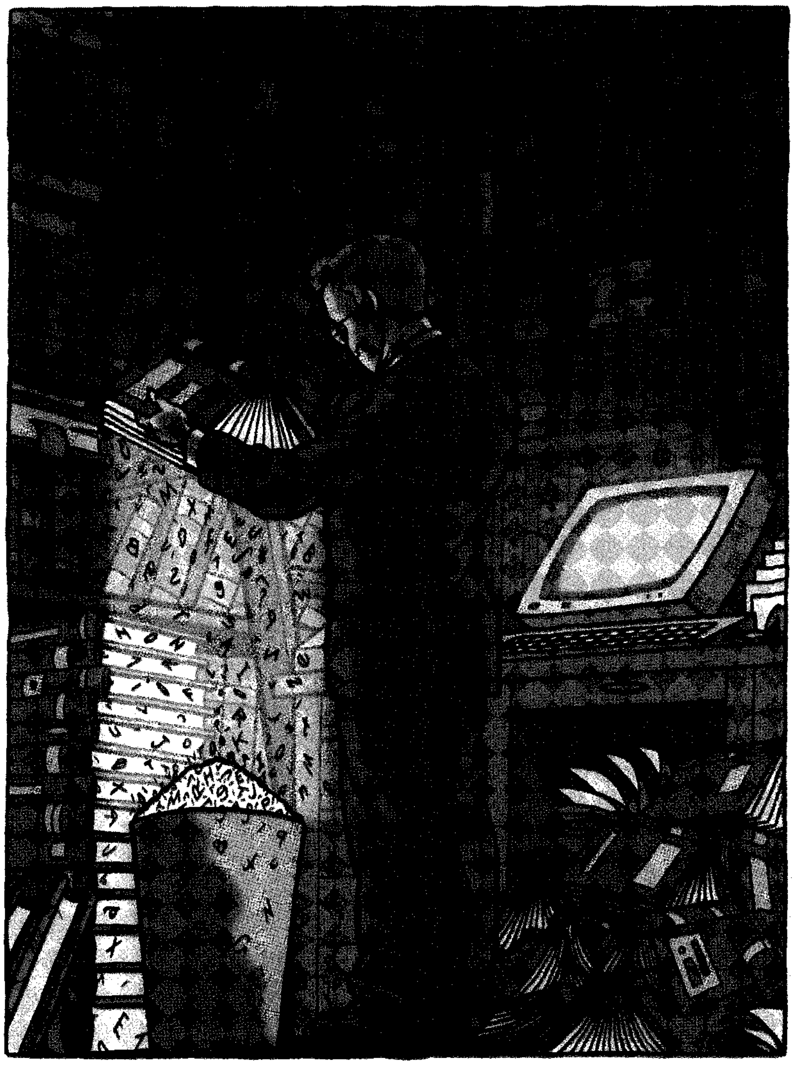
The real story is a case study of what can happen—what to a greater or lesser degree is happening in a number of cities around the country—when telecommunications enthusiasts take over big old research libraries and attempt to remake them, with corporate help, as high-traffic showplaces for information technology. Such transformations consume unforecastably large sums of money, which is why, right now, the S.F.P.L., despite receiving a goodly percentage of the city budget every year as part of Proposition E's "Preserving Libraries Fund," is essentially broke, approaching the new year with a one-million-dollar deficit in its operating budget, its new building annotated and beflagged with the names of major benefactors who enabled it, just barely, to open its doors in April.

One of these benefactors is the Pacific Telesis Group (parent to Pacific Bell, the phone company), a corporation that wants to become a "content provider" in the growing fee-for-service information business. Steven Coulter, a vice-president at Pacific Telesis, is the president of the Library Commission; he is, not surprisingly, a proponent of the virtues of informational connectivity and public-private partnerships, and he is a masterful fund-raiser for the library. Kenneth Dowlin, the City Librarian—hired away from Colorado Springs, where, as the head of the Pikes Peak Library District, he developed an early dial-up-access catalogue called Maggie's Place—also wants the S.F.P.L. to become a sort of telecommunications utility: he told members of the American Library Association in 1992 that he envisions the library offering "electronic access to each home, school, and office by the year 2000," and added, "We intend to generate revenue off of this pipeline." He also said, "I will let the planning department ship documents for building permits over my system, but I get my five per cent."

The pipeline metaphor is a useful one, and it exerts an understandably powerful hold on the minds of many library managers these days, as everyone, in and out of the stacks, tries to figure out who gets to adjust the valves and calibrate the pressure gauges, and who will have the privilege of setting tariffs on the ideational flow. Last year, the entrepreneurial S.F.P.L., not to be left out, launched Library Express, a service that charges sixty dollars an hour to clients who need, and can afford, a higher level of research assistance and document retrieval than the unpaying patron.

Not all observers like the privatizing tendencies in the public-library world, but I would feel merely churlish in pointing out the present shortcomings in this "library of the future," the outcome of so extraordinary an outpouring of civic spirit and generosity, were it not for one thing: under Dowlin and his A-team (as he calls his administrative team, a cadre of chiefs and special assistants), the S.F.P.L. has, by a conservative estimate, sent more than two hundred thousand books to landfills—many of them old, hard to find, out of print, and valuable.

"I'm sure that at least that many are gone," one librarian told me. "I would guess that maybe a quarter of them, fifty thousand, should have been thrown out. But I would guess that at least a hundred thousand shouldn't have been. And another fifty thousand that I just can't guess. . . . I personally saw at least twenty or thirty thousand books when we were still in the old building that were taken out in boxes and never made it back into the collection." This man, like most of the staff members I talked to, doesn't want me to quote him by name, since the administration has a way (some assert) of punishing dissidents by exiling them to branch duty (a charge the administration has denied). What these employees wanted me to know, though, was that the library was undergoing a kind of brain surgery. In the words of one woman I interviewed, "its EEG is going flat."



Are entrepreneurial public libraries turning into showplaces of information technology at the expense of hard-to-find and priceless books?

KELLY ALDER

The worst period of book-dumping happened late last year, in the months before the library's move to the New Main, as it is called—a large gray structure with a hole in the middle where the stacks should be. The construction was financed with more than a hundred million dollars in public money; the city's voters approved this munificent 1988 bond issue because the Old Main, they were told, couldn't hold what it was being asked to hold—a research-level general collection, the Grabhorn Collection on the History of Printing and the Development of the Book, the Schmulowitz Collection of Wit and Humor, city archives, photo archives, and so on. When appeals went out for money to furnish and outfit the capacious new building, more than thirty million dollars flowed in from private donors and "affinity groups," representing gays and lesbians, several ethnic communities, and environmentalists.

From the outside, the building looks enormous—and inside, too, the visitor can enjoy sweeping expanses of carpeting, multistory works of public art, the Chevron Corporation Teen Center, the

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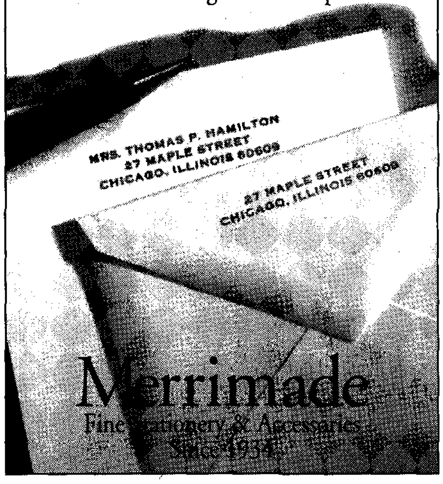

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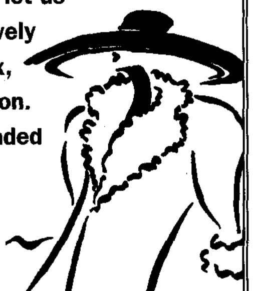

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BankAmerica Foundation Jobs and Career Center, and uninterrupted sight lines in almost every direction. Throw back your head, and you stare upward through a "glittering void" (as its principal architect, James Ingo Freed, describes it) that extends to a conical cornea of white glass eighty-six feet above you. But space, from the point of view of a collection of books, means something quite different from floor space, atrium space, or even bandwidth in a telecommunications cable, all of which the New Main has in relative abundance. Space, to a book, means shelves: the departments of the library were supposed to get enough shelves to hold their collections, with plenty of room to grow. And yet most of the departments still do not have enough shelf space to hold what they have.

Even before the influx of hundreds of thousands of new books, bought with Proposition E money, some staff members had serious doubts about the building's capacity. In 1991, when the administration passed around plans for the New Main, thirty-one library employees signed a letter contending that "of the 375,000 square feet promised, much of it will be all but useless. . . . Obviously the current plan for the new building is not meeting the needs set forth to voters to justify the expenditure." But the gravity of the problem began to dawn on the A-team only late in 1995, when everyone began mapping potential book arrangements prior to the move. Suddenly it was clear that the critics of the blueprints had been right to worry: the Main Library's collection was simply not going to fit in the New Main Library. Kathy Page, Chief of the Main, wrote in Progress Report No. 34, dated December, 1995, "Several surprises and errors were discovered that are proceeding to be solved or mitigated." How were the errors solved or mitigated? The collection itself was hastily reduced in volume. It was "weeded."

"WEEDING" is a term of art in librarianship, and it is a necessary part of what librarians do. If you have five copies of an old edition of Samuelson's "Economics," or of Booth Tarkington's "The Gentleman from Indiana," your librarianly obligation is to reduce the number. The library sells them or gives them away—or even throws them away, if nobody wants them—so as not to be choked by the foliage of what was once heavily in demand but is no longer. But, beyond such obvious examples, weeding a rich old collection such as San Francisco's takes time and careful thought. If your potential weed is a little out of your main area of knowledge, you have to look it up in standard bibliographies. You must be mindful of the traditional strengths and weaknesses of your library, and the myriad secondary ways in which an out-of-date book may enlighten the historically curious. If the book under your eye is an old edition of something that has been republished, you have to ask yourself whether that superseded edition has some intrinsic merit—something about its annotation, or the eminence of its editor—that the new one may lack. And even then there are differences of opinion, of course. To quote from a book called "Garden Friends and Foes," by Richard Headstrom, "If you were asked to prepare a list of weeds and compare it with one prepared by someone else, they would probably not be in complete agreement."

Dowlin himself offered a sound theory of weeding to a questioner at a meeting in 1992. He said, "We have many books where we may buy two hundred copies of that book because there are thousands of people who want to read it. It makes no sense to keep all two hundred copies for the rest of our life. So at the time that the usage of that particular book drops, we will retain one, two, five, whatever the appropriate number is." Except for the inflated figure of two hundred, that is a fair description of what went on before Dowlin took command, when the volume of junked books was relatively small. But what has gone on at the S.F.P.L. over the last year or so went far beyond weeding in this specialized sense. I found "Garden Friends and Foes" this spring, in a room near the shipping-and-receiving entrance in the Old Main Library—a windowless, high-ceilinged room measuring maybe ten by twelve feet. It's called the Discard Room. Stencilled on the wall in red are warnings to stack discards neatly. On most Tuesdays, until this past January, a Department of Public Works truck—a five-ton flatbed truck with wooden sides, of the kind used to pick up brush and old washing machines—drove down to that room, and two, sometimes three men threw the books, which were often tied with string in bundles of eight or ten, into the back. Sometimes the truck held other things, too, like an old chair or a shopping cart left on library property by a street person or hundreds of out-of-print phonograph records, and sometimes it held just books. When it was loaded (and it could hold perhaps twenty-five hundred bundled volumes), the truck drove to a transfer station, where the books were shifted to big rigs, along with the rest of the day's garbage, and then taken to a landfill. In fairness to the current administration, book-dumping, on a much smaller scale, has gone on for decades. (The administration sometimes says that a surplus-property law forced them to throw away all discards until 1989, but it is also correct to say that it was not until 1989 that the library sought official permission from the city to sell some of its surplus books through the Friends of the Library bookstore.) Things got especially bad this past winter, however, when Kathy Page put out the call to all stations: *Weed.* Sometimes the crew arriving from the D.P.W. would crack open the door of the Discard Room and close it fast, afraid that an eight-foot-high pile of books would collapse on them.

Here is what two librarians who were part of a weeding team before the move told me one Sunday at a coffee shop:

LIBRARIAN A: They said, "Get rid of as much as possible." And they said, "If it doesn't look good, if it needs to be repaired . . ." And then there was the question whether when you sent things to be repaired, was it actually being repaired, or were they tossing it?

LIBRARIAN B: There seemed to be a reluctance to send things to Repair because they [in Repair] were "overwhelmed."

LIBRARIAN A: People were beginning to think, Wait a second, these are just being tossed.

LIBRARIAN B: Actually, we don't know what happened, because the librarians weeded their areas but a senior librarian had the final word. We don't know what she did.

LIBRARIAN A: She started putting everything on the same [book] truck, and I said, "This is not to be thrown away, it's not to be discarded." She said, "No, just put it on."

THERE are now no copies of "Garden Friends and Foes" on the shelves of the San Francisco Public Library. There are no duplicates of it at the University of California at Berkeley or at Davis or at Stanford. There are copies of a number of Headstrom's other books in the S.F.P.L.'s collection—he has written about spiders, lizards, birds, and insects, and even "A Complete Field Guide to Nests in the United States"—but books like this sole copy of his work on weeds were weeded. Why? Its binding was slightly torn, and the weeders, as they are called, have at times been urged to weed quickly and in quantity, and often must base their decision in large part on looks.

Now, I hasten to say that many of the books in the Discard Room which I have personally checked do have duplicates on the shelves, or at least are represented by later editions of the same work. A publication such as a 1983 Civil Service exam book for sanitation workers, of which the library has twenty copies (I found it in the Discard Room under ten books about ethics and a mint Clarendon Press edition of Leibniz's "Logical Papers"), makes sense to discard. But here are some of the other books I left with, after one unannounced visit, which either have no record on-line at all, or say "Ask Librarian for holdings information," which is often, especially in the case of older circulating books, code for "I am a last copy, and I have been purged." There is "Crumbling Idols," by Hamlin Garland; a lovely little Knickerbocker Press book with color plates called "The Way to Study Birds," from 1917; a 1907 edition of "Rivers of North America," by Israel Russell; and "Handbook for the Woman Driver," by Charlotte Montgomery, which devotes a whole chapter to "Clothes and Beauty en Route." ("Dark glasses are a *must.*") "Studies of Abnormal Behavior in the Rat," by Norman Maier, was another last copy. (On page 19: "An electrified grill was interposed between the jumping platform and the canvas net. Now the rat was punished not only for staying on the platform, but also for jumping from the platform. As a control the same grill was used in the case of the female rat. This technique failed to produce neurotic attacks in either animal." Give it time.)

Although the weeding continues, the good news is that since this past January no more books have been dumped. On January 29th, the *Chronicle's* Andrew Ross and Phillip Matier published a story headlined "S.F. LIBRARY TOSSING THOUSANDS OF BOOKS" and a picture of the Discard Room. "The ongoing crime was just so apparent by then," one staff member told me. "The blood was seeping under the door." Since then, no book, to my knowledge, has been

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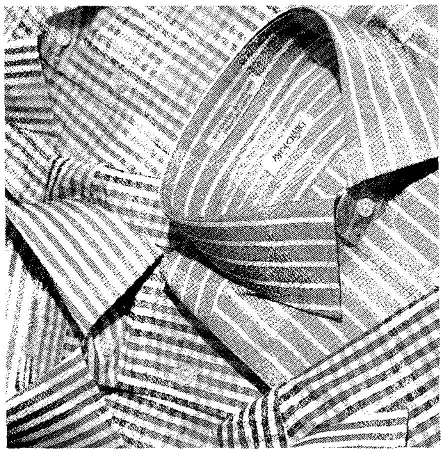

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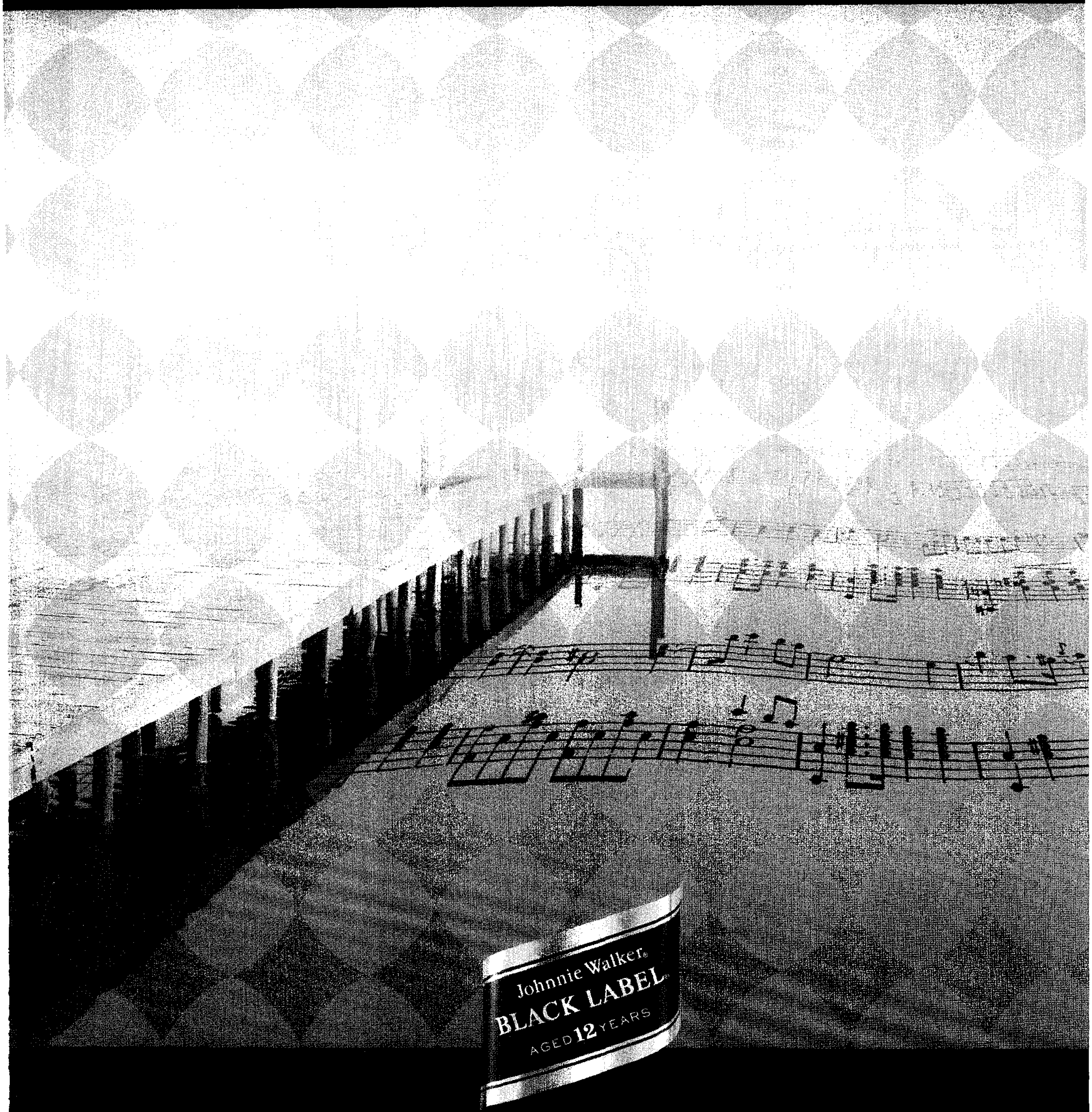
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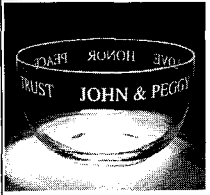

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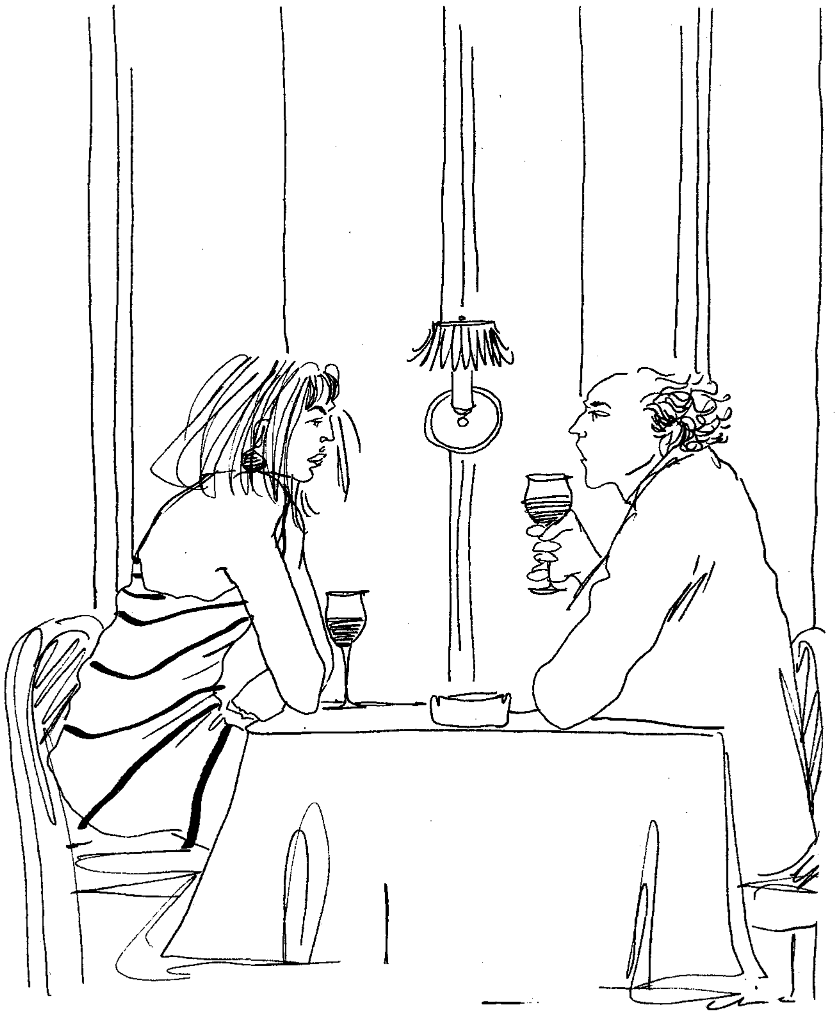

"Are you still embroiled with Scott?"

• •

thrown away. Instead, nonprofit and community groups are invited to take what they can use. Almost forty thousand discards are now on display in a large room in the Old Main; the last public giveaway got rid of five thousand books. They have gone to other libraries, here and abroad, and to schools, prisons, villages in Madagascar and Armenia. Every Friday this month the general public will have a chance to take whatever the charities don't want. Representatives of a seniors' group called the Gray Panthers left this summer with about twenty boxes of books: works on labor history and birds; books by McPhee, Malamud, Herb Caen, and a first-edition Elizabeth Bishop. (They are holding them in trust, waiting for the library to come to its senses.) At least we can be thankful that the newer rejects will continue their legible lives somewhere, and not make up a semi-sentient layer in the ultimate closed stack—the sanitary landfill.

DOWLIN, who is a respected figure among library managers, has announced that he is running for the presidency of the American Library Association next year. He narrowly lost his first race for the A.L.A. presidency, in 1987: "Truckin' for the Future: Ken Dowlin for ALA President," his campaign stickers said. In his role as A.L.A. luminary, Dowlin sometimes quotes business theorists like Everett M. Rogers, whom he has called "my guru for change." One of Rogers' books lists four ways to transform an organization—by destroying it, by restructuring it, by changing the individuals within it, and by introducing new technology. In a 1992 A.L.A. talk (part of a forum entitled "Electronic Reference in the 21st Century: Innovation Through People, Money, and Imagination"), after citing Rogers' four ways, Dowlin went on to offer a fifth: “I can tell you what happens when you get an earthquake that puts five hundred thousand books on the floor. It's a perfect opportunity to rearrange them.”

The Loma Prieta earthquake of October, 1989, allowed Dowlin and the department managers, after closing the stacks to the public (in part for safety reasons), to combine departments, forming a template for the New Main. The literature and history departments were fused first. By the time the new building opened, he had (in spite of a petition signed by twenty-seven librarians) folded sports, recreation, and most of the sciences into this large catchall category, now known as General Collections and Humanities. The library says that the reorganization was a way of moving heavily used books to open stacks and shifting less popular books to closed stacks or off-site storage. But I believe that cell biology, golfing, Elizabethan poetry, cookery, model trains, and pets were all put in the same group because they represent the old-fashioned public library of knowledge, with its space-intensive storage needs. If three or four departments were collapsed into one, they would take up less mental room and could be budgeted and staffed accordingly.

Following the earthquake, Dowlin kept the library closed for two and a half months in order to inaugurate this reorganization, even though some of his staff told him that they were prepared to open with at least partial services much earlier. Meanwhile, large numbers of books were moving all over the place. A branch information memo, dated December 7, 1989, advised, “There will be no discard pickups until the discard room at the Main Library can be cleared. It is so full it has become a fire hazard.” Between one hundred fifty and two hundred thousand infrequently checked-out books (including a nice collection of old travel books) went to an abandoned medical building, where they were stored in hospital rooms. Some of the rooms had broken windows; most were without shades or curtains. Some three thousand books were damaged beyond repair from sun or damp and thrown away. Back at the library, thousands of books that had never been entered into the computer were taken to a room on the third floor in the north wing. They sat there for several months; then every department was asked to go through these “Not On File”s, or “N.O.F.”s, as they were called, and make decisions about whether they ought to be kept or “deselected.” The room thus came to be known as the Deselection Chamber. For a brief time during this period, according to one librarian, the D.P.W. trucks were leaving with loads of books several times a week.

The N.O.F.s that survived remained boxed for about five years, inaccessible, as cardboard sagged and collapsed, and bindings within gave way. They could have been reshelved, of course, but they weren't. They weren't in the computer; they were “out-of-date material”; why spend money to reshelve them? Dowlin had already signalled his intention before the earthquake, when he told a reporter for the *Bay Guardian* that he planned to clean out what he called the “Augean stables” of the library. King Augeus, remember, had a problem with a backlog of ox dung, and Hercules managed this situation by redirecting the flow of a convenient river. One of Dowlin's labors was to channel the river of federal earthquake-relief money toward his library. The FEMA (or Federal Emergency Management Agency) grant application that Dowlin's staff prepared requested money for (among other sensible things, like physical repairs and book rebinding) a new computer system, in order to inventory earthquake-dislocated books. FEMA obliged with a large sum. The card catalogue was frozen in 1991; in 1992 the library, with additional municipal and private funding, signed a multimillion-dollar lease agreement with Digital Equipment and brought its new catalogue on-line.

Some books were fixed with FEMA money; others were simply thrown away. It wasn't until a few months before the move to the New Main that thousands of damaged books—many of them rare—stored since the earthquake in a low-ceilinged nook known as the Mouse House, about a block from the library, went out for repairs. Rather than attend to these books, according to one librarian, the library devoted its resources to the routine repair of circulating books damaged after the earthquake.

Repairing rare books in-house would take a more sophisticated preservation program than the library is willing to commit to, even though Dowlin has served on an A.L.A. president's committee on book preservation. An ensemble of new equipment for preserving manu-

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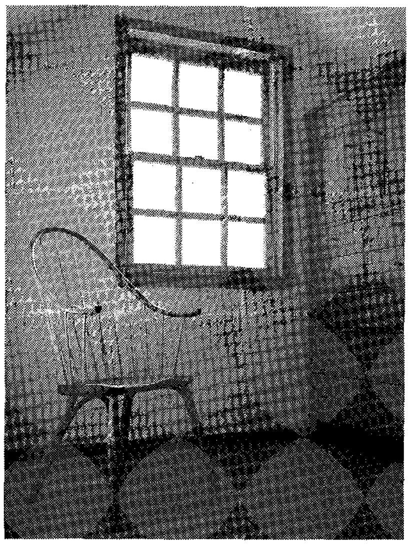
script pages—including an ultrasonic welder and a water-filtration and deionization system—remains unused (except for the welder, which is occasionally employed to produce signs for the library), and many nineteenth-century works are shipped to a commercial service that rips off the decorated bindings and encases the books' interiors in plain cloth.

In the sixties, William Holman, then the City Librarian, began an ambitious program of book-buying (out-of-print as well as new books), with the intention of turning S.F.P.L. into a high-level research library—not quite as high-level as the New York Public, but worthy even so of San Francisco's literary past, with pockets of eccentric comprehensiveness. Subsequent city librarians built on Holman's hoard, until Dowlin arrived with an alternative vision. "First and foremost," Dowlin wrote in a letter to the *Chronicle* not long ago, "S.F.P.L. is a public library, not a research facility." It's both, of course, and the books and scholarly journals stored in Brooks Hall—a vast, dusty space under the street which the library borrowed recently to store its overflow—belie Dowlin's claim. The entire McComas Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy—including unbound copies of *Amazing Stories* going back to 1929—resides in this off-site mega-crypt, as do the locked-case books, each with an acid-free identifying tag, that used to be kept behind glass in the old history-and-social-sciences department: John Gould's eight-volume "Birds of Australia" (a set of which sold at auction last March for over a quarter of a million dollars), for instance, and Bligh's "Voyages to the South Seas." (Patrons who want to consult these materials must make a special request, and wait until the next day.) A librarian was surprised to discover Athanasius Kircher's beautifully engraved fantasia on the Roman countryside, published in 1671, on a high shelf down in Brooks. This is a book dealer's paradise, sitting unprotected in the squalor of a storage area, near carpet remnants and construction debris.

Brooks Hall holds what it holds partly because there isn't enough room in the New Main. But partly, too, its contents simply don't accord with the altered conception—fashionable now among some circulation-sensitive library managers—of the public library's true mission. In August of 1992, Dowlin introduced the concept of "levelled access" in the humanities to the San Francisco Planning Commission. Levelled access involves offering the public, in Dowlin's words, "a large, generally accessible collection that is designed essentially to be current material, if you will, mass selections, current material relevant to San Francisco needs." This mass of material would be supplemented by "focus collections" in selected areas, such as art and music. What nobody outside the library quite understood was that the levelling implicit in levelled access was apparently meant to be *retroactive;* in other words, that Dowlin's plan would involve downsizing what had already been achieved, at considerable expense, by his predecessors.

The staff understood, though. Some approved; many didn't. On December 6, 1989, William Ramirez, then Chief of the Main Library, wrote a memo describing staff concerns over the events that followed the earthquake. Staff members, he wrote, "believe that current and planned actions will: Decimate the collection [through] weeding, discarding materials from the collections—both circulating and reference—which make this library unique." Members of the staff believed, Ramirez went on, that those actions would "move us in the direction of changing this library from a strong reference, research resource and service center to an undistinguished 'popular library.' " Ramirez retired the next year. But a number of Dowlin's employees have continued to resist his vision. When asked to sort books in their departments into those that had circulated within the past two years and those that had not, they did not sort. When asked to weed, they have not weeded. A branch librarian wrote me that she sometimes goes around with a due-date stamp, furtively stamping into currency books that she feels are imperilled. Employees have saved thousands of books on the sly, quietly transferring them from one department to another, and hiding them in their lockers. They reintroduce these books when the danger has passed. They call it "guerrilla librarianship."

One day last May, after a few hours of note-taking in Brooks Hall (nobody challenged me when I came and went, but I took nothing, for the books I was looking at weren't discards), I went



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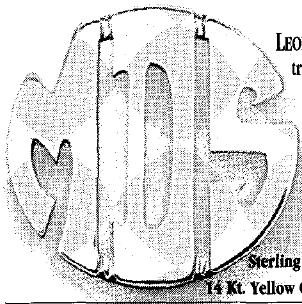

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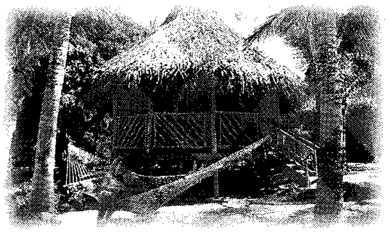
—PAUL JENKINS

back to the New Main building, negotiated its catwalks and stairways, and entered a staff-only door on the lower level. (The door was slightly ajar, foiling its magnetically actuated lock.) Under several gray Plexiglas ceiling bubbles that held surveillance cameras, I hurried through the hallways until I came to what I was looking for—the all-important sorting room of the library of the future. In the old library, returned books slid down a chute into the sorting room in plastic bins. It was a simple, durable system. In the new library, a motorized conveyor belt pulls the books down the chute one at a time; when they jam, they get hurt. It's as if you sent your clothes down to the luggage handlers in the airport without putting them in a suitcase. Hundreds of books have been torn and broken this way. Someone has taped a postcard of a pained-looking Ezra Pound above the opening out of which the books slide; the staff must sometimes poke the chute with a broom handle to keep the flow going.

The old sorting room could hold tens of thousands of books on its shelves; the new sorting room has no installed shelving. It was supposed to work on the "Federal Express model": everything would absolutely, positively get reshelved overnight. But because the plan depended on the creation of a new, lower-paid class of employee called a "shelver," which the union has opposed (and because there is no money at the moment anyway), books can take more than a month to get put back where they belong. (In staff areas, book trucks line the halls; at least forty thousand books currently await reshelving.) Hard-pressed book handlers until recently took the books that poured off the conveyor belt and flung them, as if they were dealing cards, into one of several huge mounds on the floor. I looked in and saw a sign taped to the wall that said "800s," which in the Dewey system means works of literature: under it was an enormous, spreading berm of books. This time, I was gently reprimanded by a security guard for being in a restricted area.

The sorting room is like the entire new building in that it has built into it a contempt for, or at least an indifference to, literary culture and its requirements. As one staff member told me, "De facto, this is not a good book building. There's not enough room for books, there's not enough staff to get the books back on the



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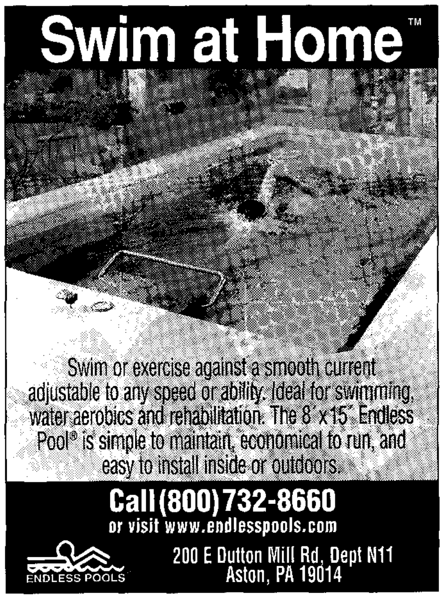

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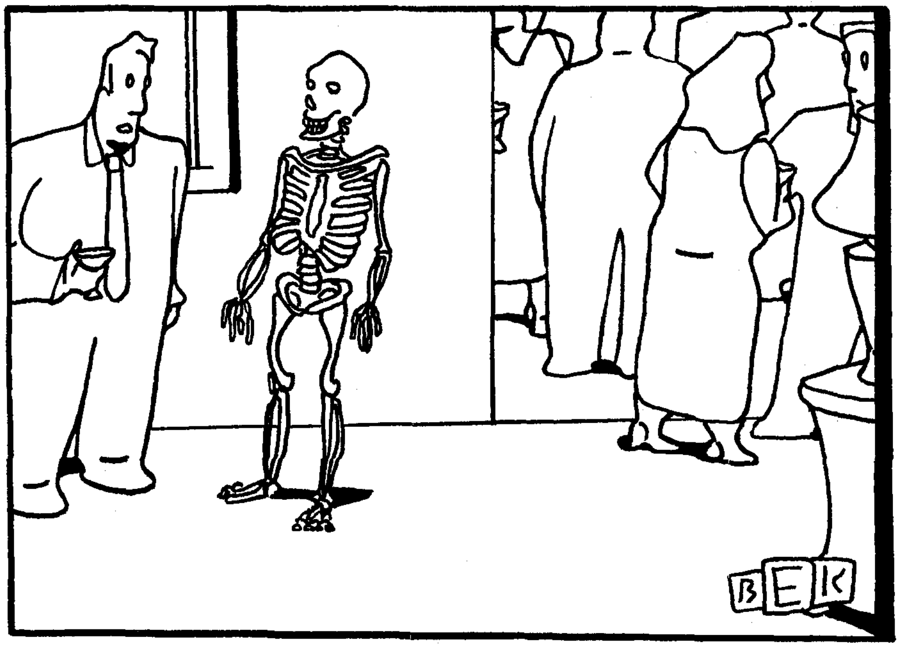
shelves, there's not enough staff to check the books out—however it happened, it's an absolute disaster."

I FIRST presented these charges in the auditorium of the New Main Library last May. (I spoke at the invitation of the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Librarians' Guild.) Since then, the library has responded to my at times intemperate attacks, and to the resultant coverage in the press, in a variety of ways. In the August issue of *Library Journal*, Dowlin is quoted as saying, "The building is doing exactly what I wanted it to do." At a Library Commission meeting in July, Kathy Page, Chief of the Main, said that the library had withdrawn more than a hundred thousand books from the entire system—the branches as well as the Main—in the period from January of 1995 to June of 1996, but she contended that the weeding was standard procedure. (Indeed, she said much weeding has yet to be done.) Librarians had been asked to do a thorough weed before the move, but only so that the movers wouldn't have to carry things no one wanted. She said that all last-copy discards were now reviewed by a Main Library subject specialist, and complied with what she called "the bible"—the library's "Collection Development Plan," which assigns a rank from 0 (not collected) through 6 (comprehensive) to every area of the collection. (For example, subjects like life sciences, general philosophy, and Italian literature are assigned a Level 2, "introductory material" rating, which may explain why I found so many old books about birds and ethics in the Discard Room, and why old Italian novels were in discard piles last month.)

At a commission meeting on August 6th, Steven Coulter, the president of the Library Commission, suggested that since so little weeding had gone on in the penurious past, the library was simply catching up. At the same meeting, Marcia Schneider, the Assistant to the City Librarian for Communications, averred that "a few truckloads" of books and government documents had gone to landfills. When I appeared on a radio show talking about the library, Schneider called in and said that I had not done a proper survey of librarians' attitudes, and had skimped on my research. In truth, I talked to anyone who wanted to talk to me; only one interviewee came to Dowlin's defense, saying that I had been unfair to him in my speech when I charged him with approving the wholesale book-dumping. "He also wants to be proud of an enormous collection," this librarian said. The rush of discards before the move "was terrible and we stopped it and we'll never do it again, but I don't think Ken had a clue that was going on." I asked her how he could have had no clue, given all the information he had as the City Librarian. "I could be naïve," she said.

A few days after I gave the speech, a member of the board of the Library



"So—Helen tells me you're dead."

Foundation told me I was a "pawn" of the employees' union; later, when the San Francisco press picked up on the story, I became a sort of weirdo Rasputin, a "ringleader" who, in the company of a ragtag band of converts, was launching an assault on the library for personal glory. In July, a letter signed by representatives of a number of the fund-raising affinity groups went out to every member of the library staff. The letter accused one librarian, Toba Singer—who had written an op-ed piece for the *Examiner* which was critical of the Balkanizing effects on the collection of special-interest donors—of homophobia and racism, and it accused me of anti-Semitism. In my speech I had used what were, the letter charged, "obviously" Holocaust references (I had, for instance, mentioned the so-called Deselection Chamber, had quoted the staff member's remark about "blood seeping under the door," and had referred to the book-dumping as "a hate crime directed at the past"); therefore I and the audience that "cheered [me] on" were "intellectually dishonest, disrespectful to the library staff, and insulting to all Jewish, gay and lesbian, and other individuals who suffered the actual Holocaust." Over the next several weeks, this letter began to appear on the desks of newspaper and radio editors.

Late in August, two librarians decided to measure the shelves of the old library in order to get a more accurate number for the oft-disparaged old building's capacity. Walter Biller (a historian) and I came along, tape measures a-dangle: it was impossible to resist this last chance to tour the old floors. We measured the card catalogue, and we read the legend high on the wall to the right of the entrance to the catalogue room: "HANDLE A BOOK / AS A BEE DOES A / FLOWER / EXTRACT / ITS SWEETS BUT / DO NOT / INJURE IT."

The four of us spent several hours at our work, nervously listening for footsteps, and then we locked up and left. Unfortunately, the librarian in charge of coming up with the spreadsheet didn't, in her haste, note down one of the crucial numbers for the seven floors of the north stacks and relied instead on a faulty diagram that was taped on the wall; her newsworthily high preliminary numbers were then immediately leaked to a reporter. "OLD LIBRARY HELD MORE BOOKS, SAY CRITICS" read the headline

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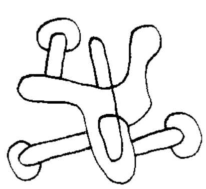
of the front-page article in the *Examiner;* and then, a few days later, "FOUR CRITICS OF LIBRARY MUST EAT THEIR WORDS." Mortifying though it was, the episode had the unforeseen effect of prompting Kathy Page to write a constructive memo to all employees, which said, among other things, "The unhappy fact remains that we have less storage capacity in the new building than we had planned for and less than we need."



I have been able to speak only a few words to Dowlin, Page's boss, directly. At the end of May, he consented to an interview with me, provided I sent him, three days in advance, a list of the questions that I wanted to ask. I mailed off a list; then, a few days before we were to meet, he (understandably) cancelled the appointment, because, in the words of his likable secretary, "we are being sued." In the *Library Journal* piece, Dowlin is quoted as saying, "I'm not convinced Mr. Baker understands the people of San Francisco and what they want. There are some people who disagree with what I wanted to do, but they're about six years too late." As for my own writing, Dowlin told a reporter for the *SF Weekly* that it was "crap."

LONG ago, the library kept a "Withdrawal Register"—it appears on a W.P.A. list of city records in the forties—but nothing like that is available now. (In the words of one librarian, "The card catalogue is the mute witness to all of this destruction.") As part of another public-records request, now Exhibit D of Baker v. San Francisco Public Library, I asked for "all records, including lists, card files . . . computer records and printouts thereof, of books withdrawn, discarded, dumped, weeded, given away, sold, pulped, or otherwise removed from the library's collections from 1987 to the present." In the same letter I wrote, "Surely there is a record of the disposition of millions of dollars' worth of city property." The library's official response, via the City Attorney's office, was "No list or compilation exists for books discarded or destroyed since 1987." There was, however, a thirty-two-megabyte computer report entitled "Purge of Items Declared Withdrawn," which principally covers items removed from the collection between January 1, 1995, and April 1, 1996. The report has never been printed out, for it would fill almost five thousand large-format-computer-paper pages. It includes only things that were deliberately withdrawn, nothing missing or stolen; and it does not include N.O.F.s, which were never in the computer. It took me two and a half hours to download it from the library's file server. Kassim Visram, a systems analyst, ran some frequency analyses, which indicate that there are about a hundred and forty-six thousand non-paperback books in the file—along with many phono disks, periodicals, cassettes, and so on. Amazingly, there are columns in the report headed "Last Copy" and "Last Main," under each of which there appears either a "yes" or a "no" for each book; Visram could thus produce a file made up entirely of last-copy discards. I downloaded that smaller list of more than seventeen thousand books and sorted it again several ways myself. Some of the discards are not troubling—the departure of yet another edition of "Gone with the Wind" doesn't represent an irreplaceable loss. But the last copy of Darwin's "The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants" (in a 1901 edition) caught my eye; and I saw more than a thousand Chinese books, hundreds of books in German and Italian, and an appalling number of research-level monographs in the sciences. History was hit particularly hard in my sample, especially (for some reason) history published by the Cambridge University Press; listed were the last copies of works by Sir Herbert Butterfield, Henry St. John Bolingbroke, William Stubbs, C. V. Wedgwood, and Lewis Namier. There were last copies of hard-to-find books by Muriel Spark, Goethe, and William Dean Howells.

According to the Automation Services Department, there was at least one earlier purge report, run in 1995, covering discards from some point in the past through the end of 1994. That purge report was itself purged, however, per Automation. It doesn't exist on any backup tape or disk. "That's a report that hasn't existed on the system for a long time," I was told. "We did do a purge of withdrawals in May of 1995, but generally we don't keep those files around for very long, because once they're withdrawn and gone, there's really no need to keep a history of that." With all due respect, I disagree. ♦

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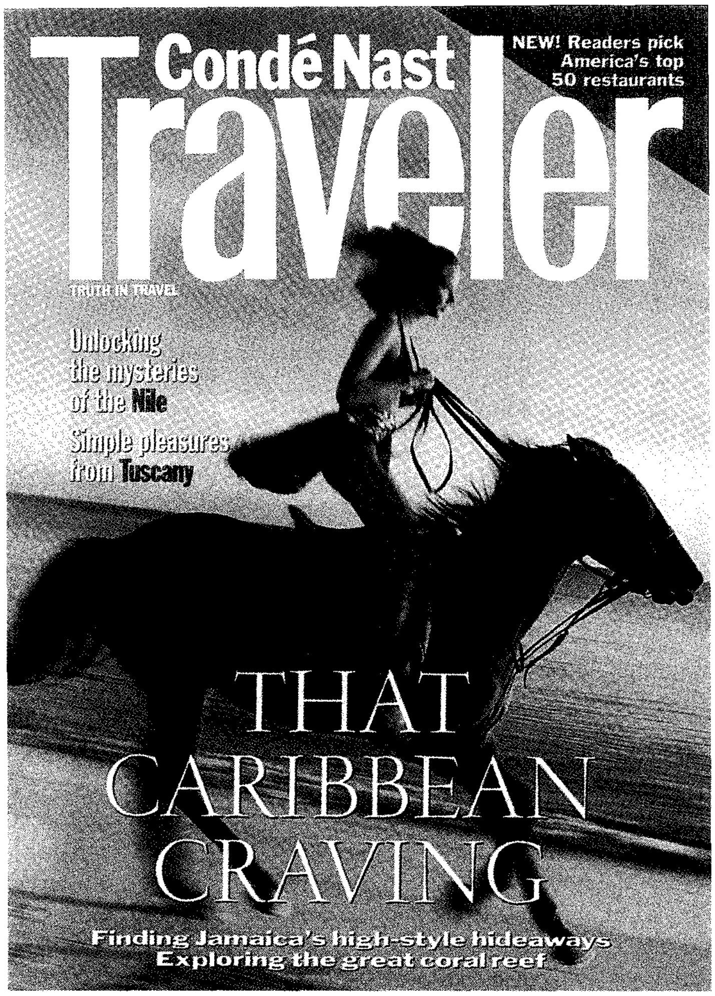

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE WOUNDS OF PEACE

It wasn't just the current crisis that brought Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasir Arafat to the White House but a process that began three and a half years ago in Oslo—one that compelled fiercely reluctant men on both sides to forge some of the most unlikely and creative partnerships in the history of diplomacy.

BY CONNIE BRUCK

I—PERES AND RABIN

"Suspicion has its own charm.
It makes you feel just and right."

WHEN I first met with Shimon Peres, in June, in a suite in downtown Tel Aviv, only a day had passed since he had formally surrendered the post of Prime Minister to Benjamin Netanyahu. In a finely tailored dark suit, with his silver hair smoothly coiffed, Peres projected his customary studied elegance—a quality that sets him apart from many of his fellow-Israelis, and that highlights a certain incongruity in matters of substance as well. Peres would probably be perceived as somewhat *different* in any society, because he is profoundly open-minded, and is possessed of a fertile imagination that brews lofty, sometimes improbably futuristic schemes. Though many of his fellow-countrymen appreciate these qualities, the Israeli electorate as a whole has judged them, repeatedly, a handicap. When Peres is called "visionary" in Israel, the subtext is often "fantasist."

The electorate's rejection was clearly weighing heavily on Peres this late-spring morning. He is commonly described as someone terribly eager to win the affection of his people, with a hunger that goes beyond a politician's desire for votes. ("He *cares* what people think—he wants to be loved," I was told by Uri Dromi, the former spokesperson for the Peres government.) Typically, Peres radiates an energy that belies his seventy-three years, but now he looked ashen and drawn, his vitality sapped by the struggle to assimilate his loss—and what that loss would mean for the Oslo peace process he had engendered. "This government is still in the world of rhetoric, but when it will come to the real stuff, I am very much reluctant to think it will do the right thing—because it's unpleasant," Peres declared of Netanyahu, in his distinctive, sonorous tones, tinged with the accent of his native Poland. "Look what I did. It wasn't pleasant—making compromises. The people didn't like it. I wasn't applauded—neither was Rabin"—Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, who was assassinated by a right-wing zealot last November. "He was called a traitor. I was called a traitor." At one point, Peres mused disconsolately, "Maybe the risk that Rabin and I took was a too great one. He paid with his life; I've paid with my work."

Still, as he spoke about the Oslo process, which he had nurtured since its inception, three and a half years ago, such doubts seemed to ebb, and he again became animated by his concern for the fate of what Rabin and he had tried to bring about. Referring to Arafat and the Palestinians, Peres warned that if Netanyahu's Likud government does "not treat them as equals and partners, there is no chance of reaching an agreement."

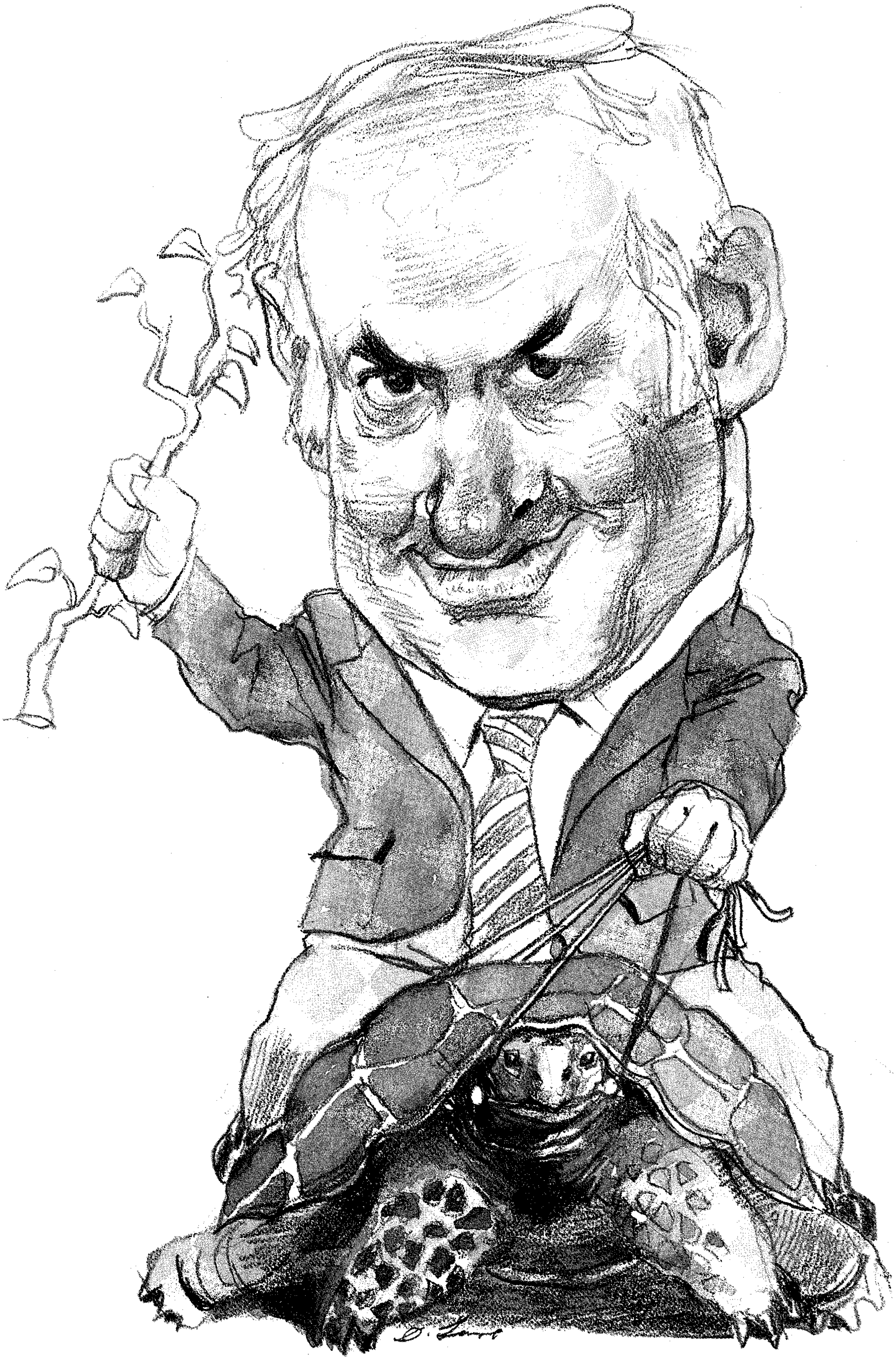
Peres had emphasized this point frequently during the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. A man who is fond of aphorisms, he now proffered a favorite: "I think what is really important for a peace process is the creation of a partner, more than a plan. Because plans don't create partners, but if you have a partner then you can negotiate a plan." He went on to say, "When I was thinking about the peace process, I knew in my heart that the greatest problem is how to transform Arafat from the most hated gentleman in this country, and himself with an array of very strange ideas, into a partner that we can sit with, and make him become acceptable to our people—maybe not beloved but at least accepted."

Following the election, Netanyahu resisted any real partnership with Arafat; it took him more than two months to accede to a meeting. When I met with Peres a second time, at the end of September, Netanyahu had just disastrously ordered the opening of a second entrance to an archeological tunnel in Jerusalem that runs alongside the western foundation of the Temple Mount, where one of Islam's holiest sites and one of its most important mosques are. The decision had sparked a lethal battle between Israelis and Palestinians that threatened to destroy the peace process, and would shortly bring Netanyahu and Arafat together in Washington. Clearly, Peres felt vindicated. Though the opening of the second entrance, which had been carried out in a provocative manner, probably reflected more ineptitude than calculation, it seemed to typify Netanyahu's lack of both delicacy and substance in his dealings with the Palestinians. The Prime Minister, urged on by Jerusalem's Mayor Ehud Olmert, had failed to consult not only the Palestinian Authority but a number of his own top security people, and had not heeded advice to accompany the move with an Israeli concession that would mollify the Palestinians. Instead, the Israelis had opened the tunnel entrance under cover of darkness with a heavy guard of border police; and the Palestinians learned of it when the sun rose.

"The whole story of the tunnel is really a march of folly," Peres declared in September. "It's not holy, it's not old, it was cut by us, not our forefathers, and it was open—the only thing they did was to add an exit to increase tourism. But now, with all the violence, we *lose* tourists."

Palestinian anger had been rising since Netanyahu's election, and almost any Israeli action might have lit the spark. Still, this was obviously good tinder. Jerusalem is the most combustible issue for Israelis

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID LEVINE



"We're not blind, we're not stupid," Netanyahu says. "And we're not playing the game of the previous government."

"Then he said Bob Dole needed him more than I do."

• •

and Palestinians; Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of an eventual Palestinian state, while Israelis insist that Jerusalem will be their undivided "eternal capital." Any action that either side takes to change the situation on the ground in that contested area has, therefore, a predictably seismic effect.

It has become a commonplace that Israel is, these days, a deeply polarized society—secular and religious, left and right. The recent crisis has intensified that polarization by simultaneously confirming the worst fears of both camps. The left had warned of a renewed *intifada* if the peace process did not continue, and the right had warned that the Palestinians had struck only a tactical, temporary peace, ultimately intending to resort to violence against Israel. Thus, the recent Palestinian rioting was the left's prophecy made manifest, and reports from Israeli intelligence claiming that Arafat had incited those riots—in which Palestinian police, for the first time since the inception of this fragile accord, battled with Israeli soldiers—was the right's. In this schismatic scenario, Peres is both the prophet and the culprit. Peres told me, "When I went yesterday to Rabbi Ovadia Yosef"—the mentor of the religious Shas Party—"a lot of people there were shouting at me, 'You gave them the rifles! You are to be blamed!' "

Whether Yasir Arafat intended his men to open fire on Israeli Defense Force soldiers is being angrily debated in Israel. But, at the least, he must have known that he was playing with inflammable material. He is, after all, someone who has survived throughout an improbable career by supreme feats of manipulation, here leveraging for maximum pressure, there pitting one force against another. And in this instance he surely had a dual aim: to increase the pressure on Netanyahu to restart the stalled Oslo process, and to show his people that he could still stand up to Israel—and was not its cowed, impotent, and (despite the many concessions he had been forced to make) empty-handed collaborator. Peres dismissed the claim that Arafat ordered the carnage: "First of all, he didn't incite to use arms, of that I am sure. And even the military said they didn't think he did that. I think he was pushed into a corner. And I don't want to justify him. But if you analyze coolly and reasonably" Netanyahu's refusal to meet with Arafat after the election, "there was no reason for it. It was a humiliation for the sake of humiliation."

The effort to transform Arafat, Peres acknowledged in June, had been a daunting challenge. Not only because Arafat had been so demonized in Israel for many years but "also because his looks are not terribly attractive, and also because his speeches are very revolting, and because he represents everything that the people of Israel didn't like, and also because of his demands on Jerusalem—I mean, he makes our lives so complicated."

Arafat's "demands on Jerusalem" were that East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Six-Day War, ultimately be turned over to the Palestinians. (Netanyahu had charged in the recent campaign, most damagingly, that Peres would accede to Arafat's demands and divide Jerusalem.) And Arafat's "revolting" speeches were those in which he continued to call for "jihad"—holy war—and make other declarations suggesting that the Palestinians' armed struggle was not over. Arafat had given these speeches in Arabic, in various parts of the world, but the Knesset member Ze'ev (Benny) Begin, the son of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin and a fervent nationalist in his own right, made it his mission after the Oslo signing to issue public transcripts of these speeches. Just before the elections, Peres commented, according to one of his associates, "Arafat is not as bad as the Likud attempts to portray him, but it is also true that he is giving Begin things to attack me with all the time."

As leader of the Likud Party, Netanyahu had hammered away ceaselessly at the partnership between Arafat and the Labor government; indeed, in the months before Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, when the antigovernment rhetoric became increasingly violent, Netanyahu had appeared at a rally on a podium draped with a banner that read, "Death to Arafat!" At Netanyahu rallies, posters featuring the image of Rabin wearing Arafat's trademark kaffiyeh were borne aloft; demonstrators outside Rabin's Tel Aviv apartment shouted that the Rabins would be killed in King of Israel Square. After the murder of Rabin by the Orthodox fanatic Yigal Amir, and after Leah Rabin publicly blamed Netanyahu for inciting the violence-prone elements on the right, Netanyahu adopted a more statesmanlike stance. But his emotional thrust did not change. Particularly after the four suicide bombings by Palestinian militants in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which killed fifty-nine people and traumatized all Israel in February and March, Netanyahu had probed insistently that most sensitive spot in the Israeli psyche—a near-phobic feeling of fragility, of being menaced by a multitude of enemies that, despite Israel's military strength, might threaten it with extinction.

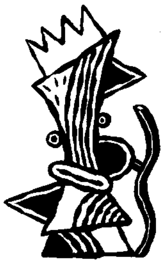
Unsurprisingly, considering Israel's history and that of the Jews, Israeli society is one in which people long for security above all else but feel they will never attain it; in which hope never makes an advance without fear attendant; in which the lessons of history, inculcated in the young, are that Jews as a people and a nation have always been hated by the world, and must not rely on anyone but themselves. And if the pursuit of security by Israel's leaders is therefore not only a national responsibility in the conventional sense but a sacred trust, then the notion of sharing that responsibility with an outsider—and, in this case, the *archetypal* outsider, Arafat—could easily be seen as sacrilege. That is precisely what the Netanyahu campaign managed to evoke in a line in one of its television advertisements, which declared that Peres "entrusted our security to Arafat!"

While Netanyahu touched Israelis' viscera, Peres once again failed to connect with a majority of Israeli voters, in this, his fifth failure to win an election outright. The narrowness of Netanyahu's victory was unprecedented in Israel's history—a difference of just under thirty thousand votes—but among Jews Peres got only forty-four per cent; he got ninety-five per cent of Arab votes. Netanyahu, for his part, won roughly ninety-five per cent of ultra-Orthodox Jews—who vote almost strictly according to the orders of their spiritual leaders.

(Jerusalem's Mayor Olmert, who claims credit for delivering that ultra-Orthodox vote to Netanyahu, told me with a smile that "some say it was one hundred and five per cent—like your Cook County.")

One Israeli who worked closely with Peres in the recent campaign said, "He has always been more appealing to the Arabs, and to foreigners, than to Israelis. He spoke like a monarch who could speak to the world, and not worry about addressing his own constituency. He invested most of his energy in convincing the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Americans to accept his way—more than the Israelis! Israelis in general are more conservative than he is."

Peres, who had a long and illustrious history in the Israeli Defense Ministry, has hardly been impervious to Israel's security concerns. (As his mentor David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, had warned him, "A dead Einstein is not a genius.") Nonetheless, he has been seen in Israel as incontrovertibly dovish at least since the mid-eighties. He told me he had come to believe that the role of the Israelis since the Six-Day War—that of military occupiers, controlling the lives of more than two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza—was insupportable. "Deep in my own thinking, I felt we cannot remain a Jewish people without a moral code. I thought that being Jewish, the real meaning is to give preference to the moral consideration. If we don't do it . . . Beauty, you have in Paris more, wine, music. The only thing that gives Jewish history its wine and perfume is really the moral consideration." In this, too, he said, he had been influenced especially by the precepts of Ben-Gurion.



The peace that Peres was envisaging would mean an end not only to unjustifiable occupation and bloodshed but to economic barriers between Israel and its neighboring Arab states and other countries that have honored the Arab boycott of Israel. The political and the economic would thus be symbiotic, each strengthening the other; and in what Peres termed "the new Middle East" a regional coöperation, modelled on the European Community, would promote democratization, economic development, national growth, and individual prosperity—all antidotes to the growing threat of Islamic fundamentalism. This was his larger plan. Such a grand regional scheme had not yet been realized, and the Palestinians' economic conditions had worsened dramatically when, after the suicide bombings, Israel enforced "closure," punitively sealing off Palestinian areas. But Israel had already begun reaping substantial peace dividends from the Oslo process. Between 1993 and the spring of 1996, Israel had established diplomatic or formal relations with thirty-eight additional member states of the United Nations, a higher proportion than ever before; Morocco and Tunisia had opened liaison offices in Israel, Oman would soon follow suit, and Qatar had made similar plans. Moreover, since the signing of the accord foreign investment in the country had grown threefold, from slightly more than a half-billion dollars to more than two billion in 1995. That same year, Israel's gross national product was eighty-five billion dollars, more than the combined G.N.P.s of its four Arab neighbors.

Not even diplomatic acceptance and burgeoning prosperity, however, could persuade a majority of Israelis to trust Peres at the helm. In fact, Peres said that the left, including him, "becomes suspect—that we represent more the whims and wishes of the Palestinians than of our own people." He added, ruefully, "A peace negotiation is with your own people as well as the other one—and that you should never forget."

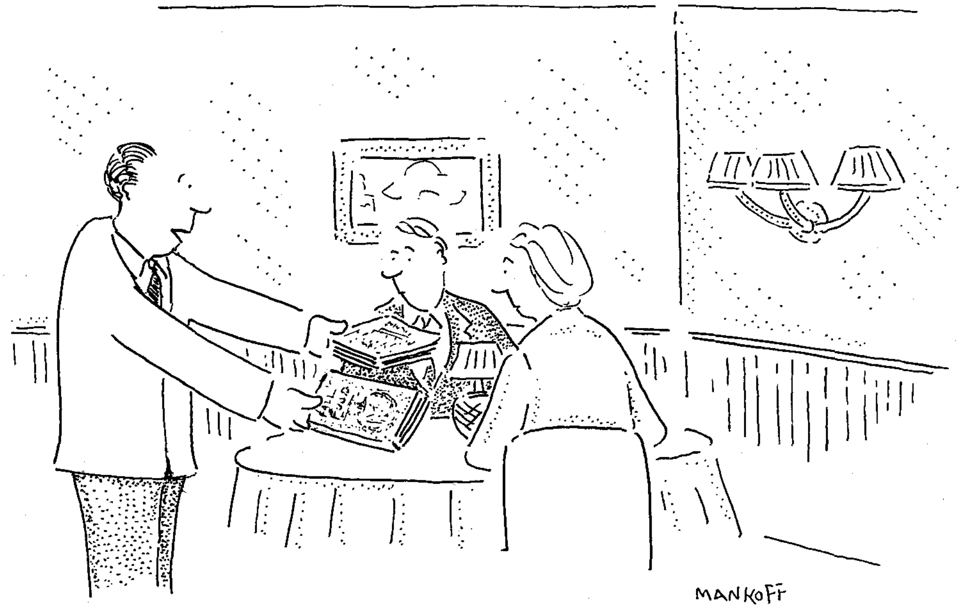
Peres told me that after his defeat he had received "thousands and thousands of letters." One was from a seventeen-year-old, an invalid from birth, who was confined to a wheelchair. "He wrote me something which I thought was very deep. He said, 'Look, there is something we can learn from our private lives, for our national life. . . . Everybody may think that if I would be asked what is the most important thing I would like to have in my life, naturally it is to get rid of the invalidism and serve in the Army. But it is not a simple proposition. I am at the same time afraid of becoming normal, and facing daily life.' He wrote, further, that he has a girlfriend, blind since birth, who expressed a similar fear—that while, on the one hand, 'the greatest wish I have in my life is to face the sun, at the same time I am terribly afraid and worried.' And he said, 'The same happens to nations. Because of wars, we become invalids, we are afraid to try something else, more normal.' This fear of seeing all of a sudden the sun . . . So I know that it's one of the very deep psychological ingredients in our national life." Peres concluded, "I'm not saying it in any sense of criticism. And in many ways

Arafat represented this incapacity, on his side and on our side, to become normal."

AFTER Rabin became Prime Minister and Peres Foreign Minister, in July of 1992, Israel actively pursued three separate peace tracks—Palestinian, Jordanian, and Syrian (the last also including Lebanon). Both the Jordanian track (consummated in a peace treaty in 1994) and the Syrian one (still far from consummation) have their own, peculiar characteristics, which are linked in part to the personalities of King Hussein and President Hafiz al-Assad and to those rulers' relationships with their fellow-countrymen and with Israel; but both fall within the parameters of roughly predictable diplomacy, especially as diplomacy is defined in the idiosyncratic Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian track has lurched from crisis to crisis, generating a heady amalgam of hope and despair. That is not really surprising, inasmuch as the hatred has run deepest here, between the occupier and the occupied, fighting over the same small stretch of land (for each, its holy land) in a conflict that has prevailed for more than a hundred years. What is surprising is that it produced the kinds of partnerships that Peres foresaw, and perhaps even some that he did not foresee—the oddest of odd couples, starkly incongruous but nonetheless, in the course of this process, joined.

Peres and Rabin were a case in point. It was not only their rivalry as jostling leaders of the Labor Party and as contenders for the highest cabinet posts—both men had been Prime Minister and Defense Minister more than once over the previous twenty-five years—that had fuelled their enmity. It was also the fact that each was the complete antithesis of the other—they might have been a dramaturge's foils. Peres, for all his "vision," is widely viewed in Israel as manipulative, devious, and masterly in back-room dealing; Rabin was famous for directness and reflexive candor. Gad Ya'acobi, a former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations and an intimate of both Peres and Rabin for decades, recently remarked to me, about Rabin, "He said what he meant and he meant what he said, and he did what he said, and meant. This is very rare in politics—you got him, *net*." It was because of Rabin's widely perceived honesty that his description of Peres in his 1979 memoirs as "an inveterate schemer" became potent ammunition for Peres's political opponents. They used it even in the most recent campaign, and it was something for which Peres never forgave Rabin.

Peres is impatient with detail, intent on the larger landscape; Rabin, a superb military analyst, revelled in detail. "Rabin thought Peres's 'new Middle East' was softheaded," one friend of Rabin commented. "He wanted hard geopolitical analysis." Peres's style of speaking is ornate, embellished with well-turned phrases and apposite allusions; Rabin's was unvarnished. Rabin was impatient with gossip, and was discreet, and even secretive, divulging information charily; Peres gathers information, serious and frivolous, with avidity, and—in the view of some close to Rabin—dispenses it too freely. Rabin betrayed no need for his people's affection. One person told me, "If I went to him and said, 'The rabbis don't like you,' he would say, 'Let them kiss my ass.' If I went to Peres and said, 'The rabbis don't like you,' he would say, 'Why? Why don't they? I love them!' " Rabin was pessimistic, cautious, deeply suspicious of the Arabs, convinced that peace with them was possible not because they had relinquished their hatred of Israel but, as one of his friends put it, "because they understand they can't beat us in war, so they will take peace"; Peres is optimistic, intellectually open, and, as a humanist, eager to believe in the creation of empathy between former enemies.



"Why don't I start you folks off with our exciting Fall Food catalogue."

Perhaps most important in Israel's military-centered society—where, as Major General Uzi Dayan told me, "the military is more powerful than in any other Western democracy," and generals tend to be lionized and politicians derided—Rabin's signal obsession with security bespoke his generation and his military experience, from serving as a young deputy commander in the Palmach, an underground Labor Zionist commando unit in the forties, to leading Israel's soldiers as chief of staff of the I.D.F. in the Six-Day War. Major General Danny Yatom, who is now the head of the Mossad, Israel's version of the C.I.A., and who, as a key Rabin military adviser, spent much of his time in Rabin's company from 1992, when Rabin became Prime Minister, until the assassination, told me how the normally taciturn Rabin's "best hours, when he had the best mood," were when he was with young soldiers ("There was no ice"), and about the confidence that Rabin inspired: "He was very honest, very direct . . . What he thought, he said. . . . Those were the characteristics that made the people of Israel vote for him, and that made the soldiers from generals down to the youngest soldiers count on him. We all loved him, we all were ready to follow him with closed eyes."

Peres made historic contributions to Israel's security as well, but he did not have the military experience and rank necessary for acceptance by the powerful military establishment. One colleague of the two men told me last spring, when Peres was Prime Minister, "It was easier for Rabin to deal with the military. They never *dared* to even have a dispute with him. With Shimon, they feel they have the ability or right to differ." And the widespread conviction in the military was that when it came to peace negotiations Peres—either because he was dovish or because he was impatient with details or because he was too easily transported by his vision—would not be sufficiently vigilant on matters of security.

But when Peres and Rabin joined forces they became what Ya'acobi posits was a "one-time historical combination . . . Israel's two elder statesmen, the most experienced in the democratic world." For Israel, the moment was opportune: with the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the Gulf War, many of the Arab states were weakened, their sponsor gone, their unity fractured; and the Palestine Liberation Organization, having sided with Saddam Hussein in his assault on Kuwait, had alienated its former Arab backers and was in desperate financial straits. By early 1993, Rabin had several peace tracks before him. There were the three formal tracks—the Palestinian, the Jordanian, and the Syrian tracks, which grew out of the Madrid Conference, orchestrated by the United States in 1991. There was also a secret channel with P.L.O. representatives in Oslo, Norway, created by Yossi Beilin, a Labor Party member of the Knesset who was close to Peres, and who became a principal architect of the Oslo accords. Rabin had assented to the Oslo channel, but he expected little from it. (Some say that he saw it as a way to keep his Foreign Minister and nemesis Peres occupied.) The formal Palestinian negotiations took place in Washington. The participants there had no idea that they were taking part in an increasingly meaningless charade.

Rabin's preference, according to several of his associates, including General Yatom and Itamar Rabinovich, then the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, who was heading the Israeli team on the Syrian track, was to achieve a peace treaty with the Syrians first. It was an approach the U.S. State Department heartily endorsed, and it made sound strategic sense: Syria was the last hostile state on Israel's borders with a force capable of going to war; Assad was a strong leader, capable of delivering what he promised; the pact would entail peace with Lebanon (and the removal of the Iran-backed guerrilla group Hezbollah from southern Lebanon) and further isolate Iran, Israel's archenemy. Peace with Syria would lead to a regional peace—the historic end of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Peres disagreed. When I spoke to him in June, he recalled that he had told Rabin, " 'No chance,' " and went on, "I thought Assad would be very tough if we did not have the agreement with the Palestinians first, whereas if we could reach an agreement with the Palestinians it should facilitate our negotiations with the Syrians."

Peres commented about his relationship with Rabin at the time, "Suspicion has its own charm. It makes you feel just and right. . . . Suspicion is a very pleasant commodity." But ultimately he realized that, as he said with a laugh, "even viciousness is not perfect." Through the spring and early summer of 1993, the two men met frequently alone to discuss the Oslo channel. "So, all of a sudden, he saw that we could talk and that nothing leaked and that he was never embarrassed and that I never tried to take credit for myself—I never leaked, I never told anybody," Peres said emphatically. "And that helped him. . . . And I told him, 'Look, both of us are suffering from shortcomings. You are too pessimistic, I am too optimistic. Let's work together, and achieve a balance.' "

Rabin probably did not need Peres's prodding to pursue peace aggressively. As part of his campaign, he had promised that within nine months of taking office, in July of 1992, he would have done his best to reach an accord with the Palestinians. Moreover, Ya'acobi and others have pointed out that, while Rabin tended to be popularly viewed as the hawk and Peres as the dove, Rabin had been committed to the concept of exchanging territory for peace longer than Peres had. In the seventies, Rabin had told colleagues that an Arab-Israeli peace arrangement would involve withdrawal from most of the territory captured during the Six-Day War; and he had fought (unsuccessfully) against the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and especially in those areas densely populated by Arabs, since he believed that these would eventually be ceded to them. During his first tenure as Prime Minister, from 1974 to 1977, Rabin famously commented that he would not mind if he had to travel to the West

"Now, for God's sake, leave the irony to people who can handle it."

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Bank using a visa. Peres, by contrast, had been hawkish on the settlement question at that time, and had enabled many settlements to be built.

But by the mid-eighties Peres, too, had become ardently committed to peace, and to doing what was necessary, including the ceding of territory, to attain it. Peres laid out the key to his plan in his private meetings with Rabin. "I will explain what I want to do about Arafat," Peres had said. "Maybe he is not a beauty queen," but the extremists who would replace Arafat if he were to disappear—such as the fundamentalist group Hamas—would be far less comely. And although Arafat over the years had proved himself to be the ultimate survivor, his skills were being taxed as never before. Because of the cutoff of funds from the rich Arab states, P.L.O. officials were not being paid, and P.L.O. offices were being closed; Arafat had nowhere to turn. Peres recalled, "I said, 'Why should we keep him in Tunisia, making troubles from there? Let him come to the heart of the troubles. Let him be on the spot, in Gaza.' " Rabin was "shocked," Peres continued. "It was like bringing your enemy as a guest to the party."

But Peres was convinced that if Arafat was allowed to return and rule in Gaza and in Jericho (the latter, a West Bank town, being a sign that he would in time be able to extend his administration to other areas of the West Bank) he would yield, for the time being, on virtually everything else. This included the Palestinians' core issues: Israeli settlements (to be dismantled); the nature and borders of a Palestinian state; Jerusalem (East Jerusalem as part of the capital of a Palestinian state); and Palestinian refugees' right of return (to include refugees both from 1967, the time of the Six-Day War, and from 1948, the time of the War of Independence, who would now total perhaps three or four million). In the secret Oslo channel, the P.L.O. negotiators, who were representing Arafat directly, were signalling this kind of flexibility.

The Israeli gambit did not go unremarked by some Palestinians close to Arafat. One Arafat confidant claimed to have told him that he and the rest of the P.L.O. leadership should remain "outside," in Tunis, keeping international pressure on the Israelis and continuing to negotiate all the core issues, and should allow the "inside" Palestinians (such as those leaders from the territories who had been conducting negotiations in Washington) to begin the interim self-rule phase in the territories. To this day, that is a common view among many Palestinians critical of the Oslo accords. But Arafat found the lure of being allowed to return and rule irresistible. As one Palestinian put it, "Every time the negotiations advanced, he would say, 'Without Jerusalem? Without Jerusalem?' But, of course, he went, without Jerusalem."

By late May of 1993, Rabin had agreed that Uri Savir, the former consul-general in New York and the newly appointed director-general of the Foreign Ministry, should go to Oslo to meet with the P.L.O. lead negotiator, Abu Alaa—thus making the channel official, for the first time. These two became, Peres told me, a "godsend couple," their bond often fateful in the course of the negotiations over the next three years. Savir, the son of the Israeli diplomat Leo Savir, who had written an article in the early eighties arguing that Israel should negotiate with the P.L.O., was singularly well disposed toward his mission. He told me recently, "When I was much younger, in the seventies, I would have told you, 'I want to be the first Israeli to shake the hand of the P.L.O.' . . . I had long believed that our biggest problem was the psychological damage of being persecuted for so long. . . . We'd suddenly become strong, but we couldn't free ourselves of the xenophobia and the paranoia. . . . Shaking the hand of Arafat would be, essentially, touching the hand of the monster."

Savir said that until the *intifada*, the Palestinian uprising of stone-throwing youths, which erupted in 1987, and which Israel, despite all its military might, could not suppress, "for most Israelis, the Palestinians didn't exist." He continued, "For the right, it was the land, not the people—and the left had a guilty conscience, so it avoided them. There was really a glass wall. So it didn't hurt, until the *intifada*."

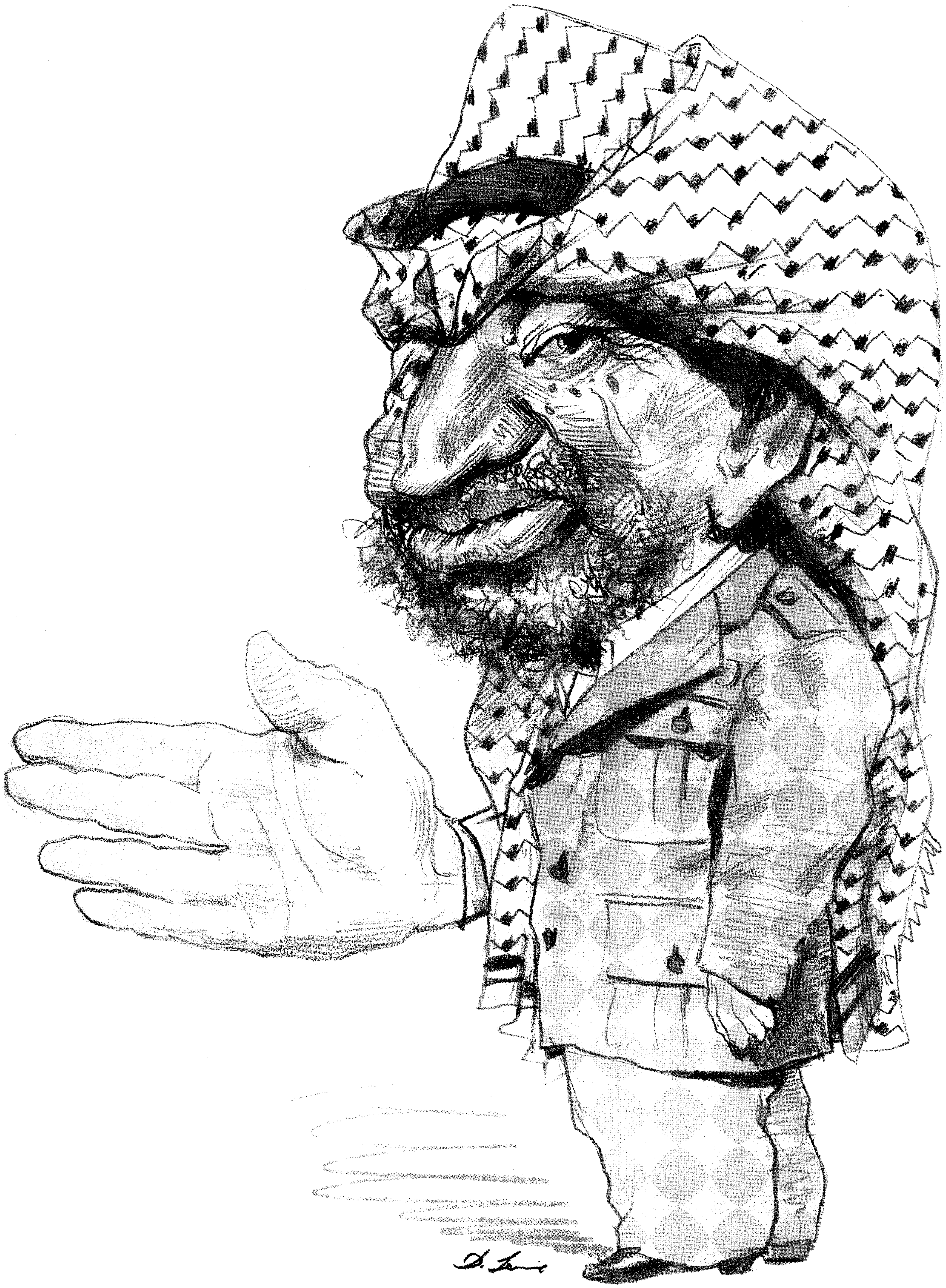
The bond that eventually formed between Savir and Abu Alaa was a natural one. Both are articulate, funny, ironic, highly committed operators who, for all their charm, are guarded and, mainly, opaque—though not, apparently, to each other. Savir, trying to explain their affinity, commented, "I think we're both ideologues, both idealistic, both have negotiating skills, both are manipulative—especially him."

Abu Alaa told me that he had never known any Israelis before he met the Oslo team, but that Arafat had briefed him thoroughly on what to expect. Savir recalled that at their initial meeting Abu Alaa had said, "Arafat told us, 'Whatever they say about security, say yes, because Israelis are very sensitive about security.' Tell me something. You are the regional superpower. You are, according to press reports, a nuclear power. You have the best army, the best navy, the best air force. We are second-rate guerrilla fighters. Why are we a threat to you?"

Savir was startled. He soon realized that the Palestinians, bearing the brunt of the Israelis' power for so many years, could not grasp Israel's psychological vulnerability; and it would be a continuing struggle to persuade the Palestinians that the Israeli security demands were not a negotiating ploy. He replied to Abu Alaa, "Because you want to live in my house."

Savir was born in 1950 in West Jerusalem, which had previously been in Palestine but had become part of Israel after the Israeli War of Independence, in 1948. Abu Alaa was born in Abu Dis, a suburb just outside East Jerusalem, which had become part of Jordan after that war. He was living abroad, working for a Saudi Arabian bank, when the Israelis conquered East Jerusalem and the West Bank in the Six-Day War, and Abu Dis came under Israeli occupation. In 1968, Abu Alaa resigned from the bank and began working full time for the P.L.O. His father had owned a considerable amount of land in a neighboring Arab village, Abu Alaa told me, but it was confiscated in the eighties for the large Jewish settlement of Ma'ale Adummim. Today, from the third-story living room of Abu Alaa's house in Abu Dis, which his father built in 1959, one can see the shining gold Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem; Abu Alaa said that his father spent many hours there in the last years of his life, gazing at the dome, from which he was separated by an Israeli checkpoint.

After debating their respective historical claims for several hours in that first meeting, Abu Alaa and Savir resolved not to discuss the past again. Abu Alaa recalled that he told Savir, "You are strong enough, you can dominate the whole region, your fighter planes can bomb wherever they want. You can make war with Syria, but you cannot make war with Palestine. We have no tanks, no planes—but



"You can't go to the dance alone," a suddenly stranded Arafat said. "You need a partner to tango."

"Let's face it, Michele. We're not getting any older."

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we are the cancer in the Israeli stomach. Let's coöperate and make peace together. And you should make it first with the Palestinians—before Jordan, before the rest. We don't have the key, but we *are* the key."

Rabin's next emissary to Oslo was Joel Singer, an Israeli lawyer who had been at the Washington firm of Sidley & Austin, and who, during an eighteen-year stint in the I.D.F.'s legal department, had worked on Israel's disengagement agreements with Egypt and Syria in the mid-seventies and on the Camp David accords, and had drafted laws for the occupied territories. A maven of Israeli-Arab legal relationships, Singer brought to his craft an almost frightening concentration. (He told me that when he is negotiating these agreements he becomes so intensely focussed on them that he forgets the names of people he knows, but "I can tell you to the comma what the second paragraph on page 175 says.") Whereas Savir describes himself as "one of the Peres boys," Singer was someone Rabin knew well and trusted. He went to Oslo and proceeded to ask Abu Alaa hundreds of questions, mainly on security issues. ("At first, I thought, I am not taking an examination," Abu Alaa recalled, "but then I decided, This is part of the process—I will!")

Singer told Rabin that he thought they would get a far better deal with the P.L.O. than with the "inside" Palestinians, in Washington, whose demands were far more extreme. He recalled, "Rabin came to believe: Let's make a bold move and make peace with those who, with all their problems, are representatives of the Palestinian people. And this is the best time, because they are so weak."

So began the marathon negotiating sessions, which over the next three years became a way of life for the participants. In the process, an intense collegiality and, eventually, affection developed, which extended beyond Savir and Abu Alaa. One Israeli participant told me he was shocked when, in his second meeting with the P.L.O. representatives in Oslo, they began to complain about how terrible Arafat was. "I thought, Why are they saying these things to me, their enemy? But it was not that they were trying to trick me. I have now known them for three years, and they continue to say these things. They say them because it is what they think. And, too, they are like us—they like to gossip. And it is like a Jewish or an Italian family: you go to dinner, and in ten minutes they are taking all the skeletons out of the closet—for you, a stranger."

In the end, as Peres had anticipated, Arafat agreed to postpone resolving all the most important issues, including the fate of Jerusalem, borders (which gets at the question of statehood), the future of the Israeli settlements, and the Palestinian refugees' right of return. Instead, he went along with the idea of "permanent-status negotiations," which were to resolve those issues within five years after an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. Meanwhile, the Israelis and the Palestinians would embark on an "interim period" of phased Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories. First, Israel would withdraw its troops from Gaza and Jericho; then there would be further Israeli withdrawals, from unspecified areas of the West Bank, and Palestinian elections would be held. In return, Arafat promised Rabin that his security forces would take over the fight against Hamas and other extremist groups. Summing up the Peres-Rabin camp's assessment of Arafat as a "package deal," one Israeli said, "You have to take him with the good and the bad—because no one else can say, 'I will agree to autonomy with interim arrangements. We will pursue terrorists, apprehend them, put them in jail—without getting even our minimum requirements from you!' "

Rabin did not tell even his closest associates about the seriousness of the Oslo channel, or the decision he was reaching. (General Yatom recalled that when he learned of it he said to Rabin, " 'Don't you count on me? You tell me almost everything!' He said that until very late he did not think the process was going to bear fruit.") Perhaps even more surprising, Rabin made that decision without consulting the I.D.F.'s then chief of staff, Ehud Barak. He did not show Barak a copy of the agreement until shortly before it became public. According to one person who knows Barak well, he then warned, "Yitzhak, be careful, we have a lot of holes. It's like a Swiss cheese." Barak also expressed his reservations in the Knesset. (Rabin later explained that he had not consulted with the military because he felt that it was important for this decision to be wholly political, not military. It was the kind of separation of roles that was, of course, critical for Israel's democracy, and it had not always existed in the past.)

The secret agreement to a Declaration of Principles took place on August 20, 1993, in Oslo; Savir and Singer represented the Israelis, and Abu Alaa and another negotiator, Hassan Asfour, the Palestinians. Peres happened to be travelling on an official trip to Scandinavia, and so participated in the last-minute negotiations secretly. He arranged for Norwegian government photographers, sworn to secrecy, to record the historic ceremony, but—in the light of the risks still inherent in the venture—directed them to take one set of photographs showing him with the group and the rest of the pictures without him. A few days later, Peres flew to California, where Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the Special Middle East Coördinator, Dennis Ross, were vacationing, to inform them of what had occurred and to gain their blessing. For several months, the Americans had known of the Oslo channel's existence but not of its substance, and they had never taken it seriously. Now, however, Ross was immediately congratulatory. Of the famously laconic Christopher, Peres later remarked to a friend, "He smiled twice and he spoke one sentence, so he was very enthusiastic."

News of Oslo shocked the world, and elicited a gamut of emotions. In Israel, these ranged from grown men in West Bank settlements weeping in grief to young soldiers dancing in the streets, as they had after the War of Independence. ("It was *ecstasy*," one of them told me.) On the other side, Arafat was vilified by many Palestinians—particularly by the intellectual community—for the paucity of the deal he struck. The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, who was close to Arafat for many years and, as a member of the P.L.O. Executive Committee, abstained from voting on the Oslo accords, told me, "Arafat was the gatekeeper of the Israeli-Arab peace—without him it could not occur. *That* was our big card. And he could have got more." Darwish, who later resigned in protest, added, "But Arafat is a mixture of a pragmatist and a dreamer. He believes in God and destiny and fate . . . and he did a miracle thing to change his image from the ugliest terrorist in our time to a Nobel Prize winner. So he made history for himself, and he brought something to his people. What is more important—a small hope or a great dream? He chose the small hope."

In the hours just before the formal Oslo signing, on the White House lawn, on September 13th, the Israelis got their first taste of vintage Arafat—in a scenario that would be played out again and again, with minor variations, during the next few years.

"Arafat is a superb negotiatior, in the way he plays to the very edge," Avi Gil, a longtime Peres aide, told me. "Before we left Israel for the signing of the Declaration of Principles, we knew that they wanted to change 'Palestinian team' in the document to 'P.L.O.' Peres and Rabin said, 'We have no problem,' but they knew Arafat's attitude. So they said, 'O.K., we'll give it to him at the last moment, or else there will be another request.' "

When they landed in the United States early that morning, Gil continued, there was a message for Peres from Abu Mazen, a P.L.O. colleague of Arafat's for several decades, who had orchestrated the Oslo negotiations from behind the scenes in Tunis, and who had emerged as Arafat's second-in-command. Gil said, "I called, and Abu Mazen said, 'There's no meeting, the Chairman is very angry, he's about to leave Washington.' Peres said, 'Play tough.' " Another call came, this time from Ahmed Tibi, a key Arafat adviser, who was in Arafat's room. "I could hear Arafat shouting in the background," Gil said. "Tibi was in a panic: 'He's packing! He's leaving!'

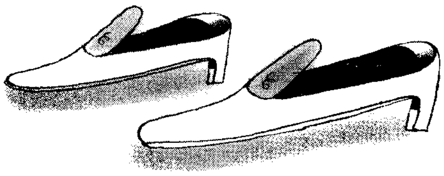
"I said, 'Ahmed, he can pack, he can leave—we will leave, we don't have to pack, we just came. The Middle East can wait another hundred years.'

" 'No! No!' Tibi said.

"I said, 'It's a question of principle. We signed it. If I call Joel Singer and say we want to make this change, he will ask for a change in return.'

" 'No! Don't call Joel Singer!' " Singer had established himself as the hard-liner, most closely associated with the military, on the Israeli negotiating team.

Arafat sent Tibi to see Peres in his Washington hotel. By this time, most of the delegation was on its way to the White House for the ceremony. "Peres said, 'I'm sorry. A deal's a deal,' " Gil continued. " 'In that case, the Chairman will leave,' Tibi said. He returned to the Chairman, then came back to our hotel. Then, at the last moment, Peres said, 'O.K., but only here, here, and here'—in three places out of the requested six, 'P.L.O.' would be inserted.



"Tibi said, 'He will not buy it! It's a failure!' Tibi called the Chairman from Peres's room. And Arafat told him, 'I'm sending you three kisses—one for you on each cheek and one for Peres.' "

At this triumphal moment, Peres and Rabin were as antipodal as ever: Peres relishing the game with Arafat and exhilarated by the achievement, and Rabin crushingly burdened by the weight of his decision, and recoiling from Arafat. Talking about the psychological struggle that Rabin had waged over Oslo, General Yatom told me, "His attitude was split—he wanted to and did not want to, at the same time." Peres, for his part, said, "Rabin decided not to go to Washington, in order to avoid handshaking with Arafat. Only in the last moment he changed his mind." Rabin's deeply rooted ambivalence, which, of course, was evident for all the world to see when the moment of that handshake arrived, was one with which a multitude of watching Israelis could identify. Peres might be vouchsafed brilliant visions, but in this country—where, as Israelis are forever reminding a visitor, the issues are *existential*—the fact that it was the hardheaded, dependable, military-minded Rabin who was at the helm gave them comfort. "Rabin," Savir commented, "was a Midwestern Israeli."

II—RABIN AND ARAFAT

No one thought it would be easy, but they weren't expecting Cairo.

THE secret of Oslo, according to Terje Larsen, the Norwegian who facilitated the negotiations, was that it forced an ongoing interdependence between the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders. "That is what pushes it along," he said in June. "Its genius is that if one fails the other fails." Thus, with the signing of the Declaration of Principles, Arafat and Rabin—surely the two least congenial leaders in the Middle East—took up their tasks.

Their associates did not expect that the two would cleave to each other, but the leaders' first substantive meeting, in Cairo, in December of 1993, proved far worse than anyone had imagined. Nabil Shaath, a Palestinian minister and a negotiator of subsequent agreements on this track, said, “We were all hit on the head with a big stick—we were faced with, possibly, cessation” of the accords. It was a clash not only of personalities—that might have been expected between Arafat and Rabin—but of interpretations of the Declaration of Principles.

The first phase of the agreement was being negotiated: the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. “The way Arafat talked to Rabin suggested that they had signed different agreements,” one of the Israeli negotiators recalled. The Declaration stated that, following the Israeli withdrawal, Israel would continue to be responsible for external security. “Arafat said,” the negotiator continued, paraphrasing, “ ‘We will be responsible for the borders of the West Bank. We will have our soldiers there.’

“Rabin said, ‘You can have some police. But, as party to the agreement, we are responsible for external security.’

“ ‘No, no, Your Excellency, maybe we will let you have a few soldiers there!’ ” This Israeli was now imitating Arafat’s high-pitched, excitable manner of speech.

“Rabin almost *exploded.* ‘We are responsible for external security!’

“ ‘Your Highness, Your Excellency, Your Highness—this is not external security! This is not external security!’ ”

The real problem at this meeting, according to two participants, was that Arafat did not realize just how limited the agreement he had signed actually was. He believed that it had opened the door to eventual statehood, and that the autonomy arrangement during the interim period would have the attributes of statehood. “Arafat had not read the agreement,” one of the participants claimed. “He’d read the headings—and his people gave him a rosier interpretation.” Another participant maintained, “Arafat was misled by Abu Alaa. Abu Alaa believed in the agreement, tried to sell it to Arafat, and presented it in the most optimistic way.” This participant also said, “Sometimes in these agreements you have to use vague language—you say, ‘We will have to do this, let’s not write it in humiliating words, let’s write it in a way to make it more edible for our public.’ That’s O.K. But when you go to your leader and tell him the positive way, not telling him the hard facts—or, to bring him along, make it even more positive—that is to mislead.” He added that in the Cairo meeting Arafat had repeatedly protested, “But I was told—I was told!”

Abu Mazen acknowledged to me that at the time of the Cairo meeting Arafat was entertaining a misconception of the agreement. “In the first few months” after the signing, “he believed that he was coming for an independent state. They said ‘autonomy.’ ”

When I asked why Arafat believed that, Abu Mazen replied, “Arafat sometimes understands things as he wants to.”

If Arafat’s negotiators did indeed present him with a “rosier interpretation” of the agreement, it may be that they themselves hoped that that might become the reality. Mahmoud Darwish, who is a friend of Abu Alaa’s and Abu Mazen’s, told me that both men “were happy” that the Declaration of Principles “was ambiguous,” and he added, “They didn’t pay attention to the fact that ambiguity serves the strong, not the weak.”

The months after the Cairo meeting were a “learning curve for Arafat—he had to come in and realize there was an opposite Israeli interpretation,” Joel Singer said. Ultimately, “we got Arafat to agree to our interpretation of the D.O.P.,” he continued. This caused unhappiness among many Palestinians; Abu Mazen stayed away from the negotiations for a while. Singer added, “We gave some fig leaves and tactical concessions in exchange for his recognizing our main concerns.” Abu Mazen did not rejoin Arafat in Gaza until the fall of 1995. “I wasn’t happy with the implementation,” he said of the accords.

The Palestinians were probably right to be unhappy. The Israelis had prevailed over Arafat on an issue that was at the heart of this negotiation: who would control the borders, or “gateways,” between the Palestinian territories and neighboring Arab countries—the Allenby Bridge, connecting the West Bank and Jordan, and the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt. Singer called the gateways negotiation a “dress rehearsal” for the larger agreement, because all the problems of Palestinian autonomy were there in microcosm. What was most important to the Israe-

“Would any of you guys be offended if I told a joke that is a touch prurient?”

lis was that it represented security—the need to maintain control over who was entering and leaving these areas. For the Palestinians, it represented their desire for a sovereign state, free of the humiliation of Israeli checkpoints.

"I see by your résumé that you're a woman."

"Everything that is connected with their sense of self-expression and dignity and our sense of security conflicted at each point," Savir said. "The Palestinians wanted to have their passports stamped when they came into Allenby or Rafah, but we had to know who they were. We said, 'A Palestinian policeman can sit next to an Israeli policeman.' They said, 'No! It is very emotional, this is autonomy, coming home.' " And, if someone the Israelis considered a possible security risk was entering, the Israelis would want to interrogate that person alone, Savir continued, but the Palestinians objected strenuously to that.

Finally, a procedure was agreed upon for Palestinians entering Palestinian areas from other Arab countries. Savir said, "A Palestinian stamps their passport. Behind the Palestinian there is tinted glass. Behind that, an Israeli. The Palestinian puts the documents in a box. They go to the Israeli, who has a computer. He can send them back, with questions. The Palestinian asks them. Only if the person is suspect does he go into a back room to be interrogated." Savir concluded by saying, "There was a three-day discussion as to whether the glass should be tinted or opaque. I think we decided dark-tinted."

After the disastrous Rabin-Arafat encounter in Cairo, it was more often Peres whom Rabin sent to meet with Arafat; and in these meetings, Peres told me, "I went a long way on my own in order to meet many of their expectations . . . without annoying everybody back home." Those expectations were the national symbols that Arafat craved, such as a Palestinian flag and a Palestinian passport. Singer told me that, although the Israelis were at first somewhat bemused by Arafat, they grasped one central truth about him—he had national aspirations. The most important goal for him was to establish an independent Palestinian country, Singer went on. "All his life, he had fought for this goal, and it overshadowed all else. They had suffered so much—he was ready to sacrifice for this. And national aspirations had external manifestations. A police force, with uniforms—he *loved* parades, loved it when they saluted him. He wanted a Palestinian port, a Palestinian airport, Palestinian currency, Palestinian stamps."

A former P.L.O. official who was very close to Arafat in Tunis told me last spring, "Yes, Oslo was flawed. But the process has a life of its own. I travelled, just now, on a Palestinian passport." He paused, and added, "We are *mad* about symbols."

In one important sense, then, the Israeli bet on Arafat was paying off. He *was* someone who had the willingness and the political power to make unpopular, historic concessions; he had done so in the initial Oslo agreement, and he was continuing to do so. But negative elements in this "package deal" were becoming clearer. Though the Israelis had always been wary of Arafat's veracity, now they found themselves vulnerable to its shortcomings. Commenting on Arafat's relationship to truthtelling, one of his closest associates told an observer, "If Arafat ever once stumbled and told the truth, he would say, 'Please forgive me!' "

Terje Larsen, who in 1994 became the United Nations Special Coördinator in the Occupied Territories, and has a Gaza compound across the street from Arafat's, recalled one time when Arafat was attempting to persuade Peres that Peres had made a specific commitment to him: "Arafat said, 'You told me on the phone—'

"Peres said, 'No.'

"Arafat said, 'Yes, you said so. Larsen was there in my office. And Mr. Dennis' "—Dennis Ross. " 'Larsen, you are my international witness. Mr. Peres, I have an international witness!' " Everyone else in the room knew that this was untrue.

One Palestinian told me that in order to understand Arafat one had to realize that he represented "the entire spectrum" of the Palestinian people—"the weaknesses, the strengths, the evils, the ills, the good," and that he lied most of the time but didn't think he was lying—"because that lie is congruent with *this* color in the spectrum."

At times, Arafat behaved in such an eccentric way that the Americans, the Israelis, and the Norwegians dealing with him asked themselves, "Is it theatre? Or is he actually losing his marbles?" They also indulged in Arafat imitations—so habitually that once when Arafat phoned Larsen's wife in Norway she mistook him for an imitator. An Israeli who spent many long hours in Arafat's company described what he had witnessed repeatedly: "He is talking to you, and it is like he is *out* there, giving this long monologue you cannot follow. It is only later, in a retrospective analysis with the Americans and Norwegians, that sometimes we see maybe there *is* reason there. He has to play to so many competing interests, so he is zigzagging between what this group wants and that group wants . . . but he is the only one who can make concessions. . . . And in his convoluted way he does. It is bizarre to see. He has had to make many decisions under great pressure, and he has made them—but it is unpleasant to watch. The more pressure he is put under, the more erratic his behavior.

"Imagine Arafat sitting in a small room with an Israeli and Palestinian group," the negotiator continued. "We are reaching the hard-core issues: 'Either you reach this or there is no agreement.' His colleagues are saying, 'No! No! No!' We say, 'You must.' Suddenly, you lose him. He can sit for an hour, looking at a spot on the wall, saying nothing. Then his legs begin to tremble—if he talks, he talks in a high-pitched voice. He doesn't complete his sentences, then he shouts, then he retreats into a long period of silence."

This person added, "After one day, two days, three days, he will try to get the most out of us, and then he will make a concession—despite all his people. He will try to get some Arab leader like Mubarak to make some statement supporting the position. And then he will talk publicly in a very harsh manner—like in Johannesburg."

Arafat delivered a notorious speech in a mosque in Johannesburg on May 10, 1994—just days after the signing of the Gaza-Jericho accords, in which he had acceded fully to the Israelis' demands. In this speech Arafat not only exhorted his listeners to take part in a jihad for Jerusalem but compared the Oslo accords to the peace treaty that the Prophet Muhammad signed with the tribe of Qureish. Once Muhammad had grown stronger, according to Arafat's interpretation, he revoked the treaty, going to war against the Qureish and destroying them. For opposition figures like Benny Begin, in the quest for a Likud victory such speeches—which Begin charged were a violation of the accords—were extremely useful in building Israeli mistrust of the peace process .

The speeches were violations of the spirit, if not the letter, of the accords; and, although the Rabin-Peres Labor government rarely acknowledged it publicly, there were many other violations as well. One Oslo participant told me that Arafat's attitude toward compliance with the agreement was perhaps best illustrated by the way he entered Gaza on the day of his triumphal return: with people who were wanted by the Israelis hidden in the trunk of his car. "We had books and books filled with violations," this person told me, and added, "I saw Rabin and Peres so angry at what they had to eat from the Palestinians. But, had they talked back publicly, everyone in Israel would have said, '*You* chose them. You're saying that they violate all the agreements, that they can't be trusted, O.K. *You* made the mistake, so admit that something must be done.' "

Rabin and Peres felt that Arafat's most serious failings were in the area of security. For Rabin, especially, this was the linchpin of the whole agreement. As Abu Alaa expressed it, "Rabin was thinking, eating, drinking, dreaming security." Before the D.O.P. was signed, one Israeli negotiator recalled, "They told us, 'Once we come to Gaza, we will declare a curfew. We'll go from house to house searching for weapons. We'll search for Hamas—some we will kill, some put in jail, some reëducate—and we will do it better than you! Trust us!' "

But when Arafat arrived in Gaza, in July, 1994, he set about trying to neutralize Hamas politically—trying to win its members with jobs and favors, using his trademark divide-and-conquer tactics. "What he was attempting was the Palestinization of Hamas," one of his associates told me. "Its leaders are in Jordan and Damascus—he was trying to win over the local elements." As far as the Israelis were concerned, however, the curfews and weapons seizures and jailings that had been promised were not taking place; and terror was continuing. While Israeli soldiers were less likely to be injured by Molotov cocktails in Gaza and in the West Bank than they had been before the accords, there was now an increase in civilian fatalities from suicide bombings in the heart of Israel.

It was not until early 1995 that Rabin was satisfied that Arafat was undertaking aggressive security measures, and he ordered a secret back channel to begin negotiating the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank. The resulting accords came to be known as Oslo II.

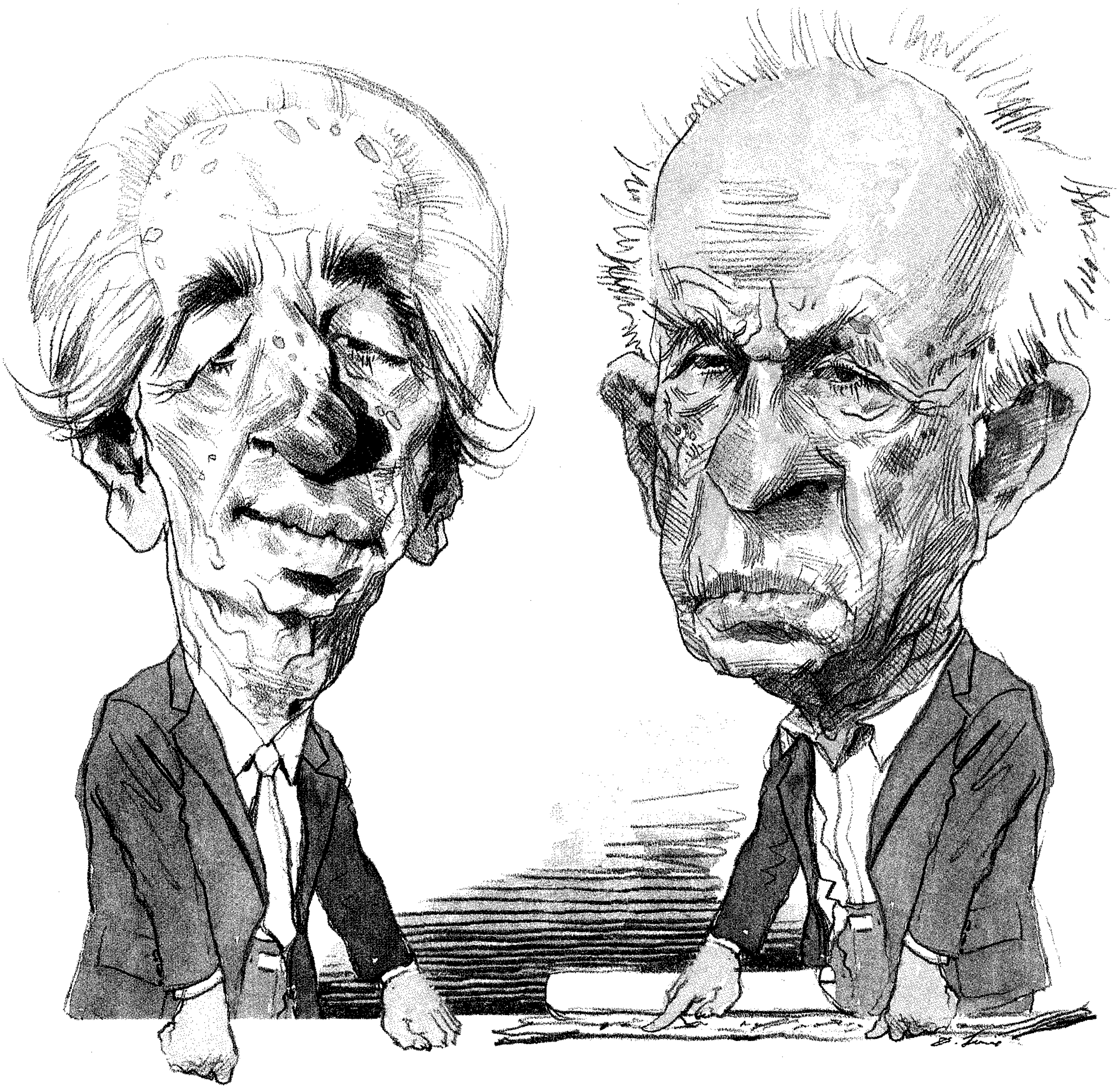
DIFFICULT as achieving the Gaza-Jericho accords had been, the challenge they posed was dwarfed by that of Oslo II. In Gaza, there were about a dozen Jewish settlements, so the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Palestinian-populated areas there had been relatively straightforward. In the West Bank, the settlements were numerous—about a hundred and forty—and had been strategically dispersed; Peres, employing one of his favorite aphorisms, told me, "You can make an omelette from eggs, but you cannot make eggs from an omelette, and, unfortunately, that area"—the West Bank—"has been thoroughly omeletted."

Furthermore, for the vast majority of Israelis primitive Gaza—where donkeys pulling carts vied for space with cars on largely unpaved roads, and the squalor of the refugee camps levelled an unending accusation—held little emotional pull. But ceding the West Bank has long been heresy, not only for the West Bank settlers, many of whom are staking their claim to what they consider their Biblical patrimony, but also for those secular Jews on the right who cling to the old dream of Greater Israel.

Lieutenant General Amnon Shahak, the I.D.F. chief of staff, had led the Gaza-Jericho negotiations. Shahak told Rabin that the West Bank negotiations should not be led by the military, though the military would participate on the negotiating team. At Peres's urging, Rabin agreed that Savir, who had played a relatively minor role in Gaza-Jericho, should lead Oslo II. Thus Savir and Abu Alaa returned to the fore, and they determined that they would strike a better balance than had been struck in Gaza-Jericho, which was generally seen by the Palestinians as a humiliating surrender; in Savir's and Abu Alaa's lexicon, they would attempt to be guided by a "balance of interests," rather than a "balance of power," since the balance of power was, of course, dramatically one-sided.

The Palestinians involved in these negotiations tended to regard the dynamics on the Israeli side as an ongoing battle between the military (which they saw as all-powerful in Israel) and the Foreign Ministry, with the Foreign Ministry nearly always losing. But Savir sought to minimize any tensions between the two groups, maintaining that in the course of this process they had become a unified, perfectly coördinated team. "At the upper levels, this is a military which is very dovish," Savir said last spring. "There is not another military in the world that would have been so open to being engaged in a process where it would be yielding assets, and control, in a search for peace."

The leading military member of the Oslo II team was Major General Uzi Dayan, nephew of the military hero Moshe Dayan. His task was to devise a system that would reduce the potential for



The odd couple: Peres and Rabin had become fully interdependent—"like a functioning bad marriage."

friction between the two populations of the West Bank—roughly a hundred and twenty thousand Jews living among about a million two hundred thousand Palestinians—and would provide security for the Jews. The Palestinian team had anticipated that during an interim period the West Bank would be divided into areas under Palestinian control (Palestinian-populated areas) and areas under Israeli control (Israeli settlements and military sites). But Dayan promoted the idea of a third area—a kind of hybrid, in which the Palestinian police would have responsibility for public order among Palestinians there but the Israelis would have "overriding responsibility for security" (meaning that they could operate there if they wanted to). This, of course, enabled the Israelis to extend their forces into areas that might otherwise have been closed to them—"so that we can have security jurisdiction even if they have territorial jurisdiction," as one Israeli team member explained it.

It was up to Peres to get Arafat to accept Dayan's plan. In early July of 1995, the two men met, and Peres prevailed. Indeed, nearly all Arafat's concessions occurred in meetings with Peres. "Peres grew much tougher as these negotiations went on," one team member told me, "and, contrary to public perception, it was he who really twisted Arafat's arm. Rabin was bending over backward to be nice to Arafat."

Three areas—A, B, and C—were created. All the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators whom I interviewed saw Arafat's agreement to allow Israel "overriding responsibility for security" in the hybrid Area B as one of his biggest concessions in Oslo II. "The Chairman made these compromises for strategic reasons," the negotiator Hassan Asfour commented. "It is difficult to understand *what* strategic reasons."

Some say, however, that it was in return for Arafat's concession that Peres made what was the most substantive Israeli concession of the entire process—one that was made without the usual military approval, and would have important ramifications in the coming months. Peres agreed that, beginning in September of 1996, Israeli troops would begin to withdraw ("redeploy") in three six-month phases from Area C (Israeli-controlled territory), and that the transfer of internal-security responsibility in Areas B and C would follow the same timetable. (The first was to have taken place on September 7th, but, of course, it has not yet occurred.) This committed Israel to the withdrawal of its troops from most of the territory more than a year before the permanent-status negotiations were concluded. "I was against it," declared General Ilan Biran—a hard-liner in this process, who often clashed with the Palestinian negotiators—because, he explained, in eighteen months they will "have control of the land . . . but Jerusalem, right of return, settlements all remain for permanent status . . . and if we have given them the land what assets remain [to trade]?"

Peres told me that this concession was "difficult" for Rabin, but that he did have Rabin's approval. By the summer of 1995, Rabin's confidence in the process had surged, and he and Peres were fully in accord. "They were so aligned," Singer said, "that if you just read the words spoken you wouldn't know whether it was Rabin or Peres." Some, from a distance, marvelled at the calm, or even harmony, between the two men, and mistook it for genuine friendship. What seems to have been the case, on the whole, was that they were so fixed on their common goal that they had become fully interdependent—"like a functioning bad marriage," one who knew both of them well remarked.

THE relationship that plainly had the greatest impact on the course of all the Oslo negotiations, however, was that between Savir and Abu Alaa. By breaking logjams, it propelled the process forward, but the strength of the relationship only pointed up the fragility of the overall process. One observer explained, "The Savir–Abu Alaa relationship was a very complicated, very personal one . . . and the Oslo II deal was being developed through that relationship. They would often coördinate against their principals—there were times when . . . Abu Alaa did not want Arafat to know what was going on. Arafat does not have a mind for details, and Abu Alaa was afraid Arafat would undermine what he was doing. And, because Savir was engaged with Abu Alaa, he had a need to show loyalty to him. If Abu Alaa didn't want Arafat engaged . . . then Savir, out of loyalty to Abu Alaa, would support that." This despite the fact that Abu Alaa was more unyielding than Arafat. Although he had apparently encouraged Arafat to sign the original Declaration of Principles, he did not intend to let the Israelis continue to wring unpalatable compromises from the Palestinians. This person added that Abu Alaa had been "furious" upon learning about Arafat's concessions for Area B, made when Arafat last met with Peres: "He felt Arafat gave away the store—Abu Alaa didn't want it to happen again."

By mid-August of 1995, the Oslo II negotiations—which consisted of a hundred Israelis and Palestinians, working in groups, in the resort of Eilat—showed no signs of winding down. There was some concern among American officials involved in the process that "the whole thing would unravel," as one put it, because "Rabin's polls were slipping, Netanyahu was ahead, the pressure was really building against Rabin."

So Terje Larsen, who consistently kept in close touch with both the Palestinians and the Israelis, devised a plan with Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk, the United States Ambassador to Israel, to have a dinner for Arafat, attended by Larsen, Indyk, and Edward Abington, the United States consul-general in Jerusalem (and de-facto envoy to the Palestinians). At the dinner, according to one person, "Arafat found out things he hadn't known, which Abu Alaa had kept from him. He was disconcerted." Larsen then urged Arafat, "You have to sit down with Mr. Peres. The format of the meetings in Eilat can't do it. The presence of the leaders is essential to get results." Larsen, who had talked to Peres, telling him about the dinner, and to expect a call, said to Arafat, "Let's call him now." And Arafat said, "Why not?"

Arafat and Peres met a few days later. At the meeting, Abu Alaa's fears were realized. Arafat made another far-reaching concession. The Palestinians had pressed the Israelis to guarantee that in their further redeployment they would withdraw from, say, thirty per cent of the remaining area during each successive six-month period; the Israelis would thus be specifying how much of the West Bank would be in Palestinian hands at the end of eighteen months. Specifically, Abu Alaa was arguing for a total of eighty-seven per cent. Instead, Arafat agreed that there would be no percentages attached to the further-redeployment schedule. The Israelis might therefore argue, if tendentiously, that a relatively minor redeployment in the first period, and even in the second, would satisfy their obligation—though there would still be no colorable escape from their carrying out the full extent of their obligation at the start of the third phase, in September of 1997.

Not until the final days of the Oslo II negotiations was the definitive Israeli map of the West Bank—showing exactly how Areas A, B, and C would be drawn—put on the negotiating table. For the Palestinians, it was a nightmarish sight. They had expected the Palestinian Areas A and B to consist of about forty per cent of the West Bank, but on the Israeli map they were only twenty-seven per cent—of which the wholly Palestinian-controlled Area A was only three per cent. Even worse, there was little contiguity among the Palestinian areas; they were disconnected islands of brown and yellow in a sea of white. Arafat is said to have shouted that they were like "the cantons of South Africa!"

It was Abu Alaa's reaction, however, that was the most eloquent: shortly after viewing the map, he collapsed. Exhaustion no doubt played a part, for he and the other negotiators had been working around the clock for weeks, catching an hour of sleep here and there, but Israelis and Palestinians alike read it as a somatic rejection of something too awful for him to contemplate. Arafat and Peres, afraid that he was having a heart attack, called an ambulance, and Peres insisted on accompanying him to the hospital, because it was the middle of the night, and he was afraid that Abu Alaa, arriving unattended in an Israeli hospital, might not receive immediate attention. "I will never forget it," Abu Alaa told me, recalling the ambulance ride. "Peres said, 'Abu Alaa, we need you. Your people need you. The Israeli people need you. You were able to take from us with your smile more than all the Arab armies.' " Abu Alaa recovered in time to complete the negotiations, but to this day he is angry at Larsen for having engineered that dinner which resulted in Arafat's meeting Peres and making the concessions that Abu Alaa abhorred. He was not on speaking terms with Larsen for some time afterward, and blamed him for the fact that the Palestinians didn't get guaranteed percentages in the agreement.

From the Palestinian point of view, the implementation agreements were an exercise in ever-diminishing expectations. Nasser Al-Kidwa, the Palestinian observer at the United Nations, who is Arafat's nephew, told me that he strongly supported the first Oslo agreement, but he considered the subsequent agreements "the worst possible performance in the world." He added that he was not blaming the negotiators personally for that performance; it was simply that the Palestinians were so massively outgunned. Comparing the dearth of professional expertise on the Palestinian side to the Israeli support structure, he said, "We need institutions, ministries, teams." There was, for example, no one on the Palestinian side comparable to the lawyer Joel Singer, who had prepared fifteen drafts of the Oslo II agreement (a document more than three hundred pages long) before he submitted one to the Palestinians for negotiation.

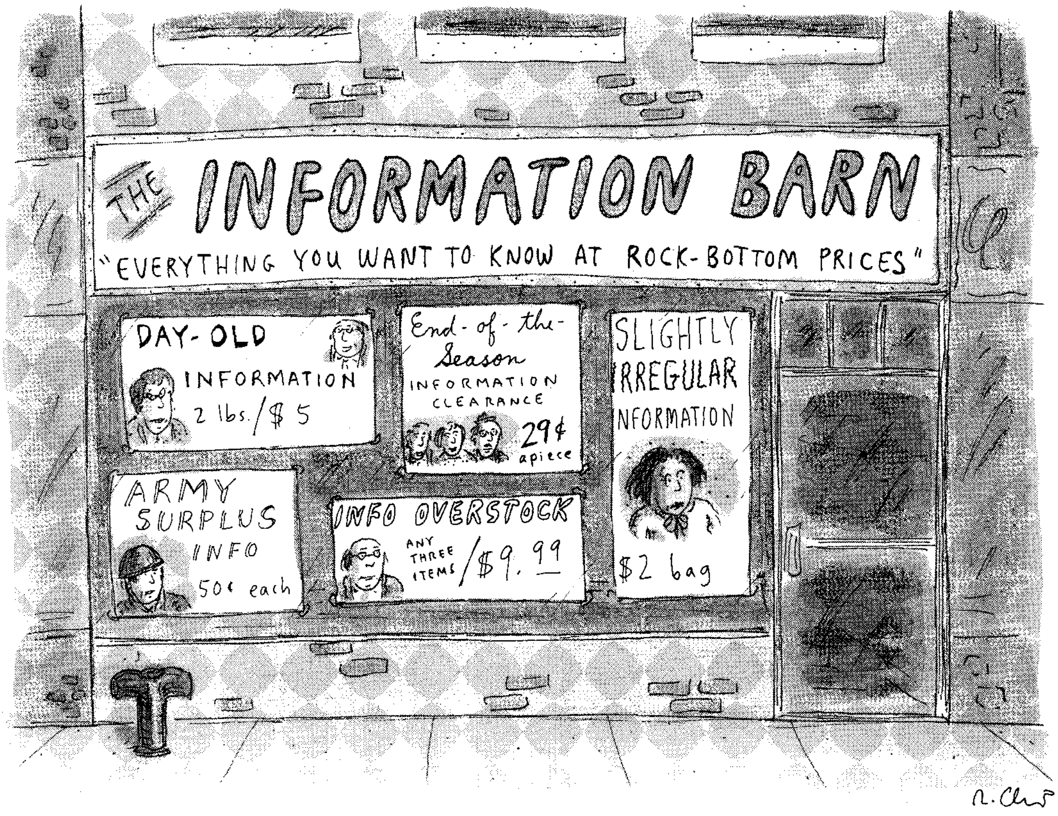
The Israelis, for their part, had reason to be generally satisfied with these agreements (even if some of their negotiators, like General Biran, would find fault with certain provisions), and also satisfied with Arafat, for his willingness to make major concessions. One American official remarked that he had become "Israel's Arafat, our Arafat."

And at the signing of Oslo II, which took place in Washington in September of 1995, Rabin appeared far more relaxed with Arafat than he had two years earlier. Another last-minute crisis had arisen—this one over the Israeli redeployment from Hebron—and it came about when Rabin and Arafat were already with Clinton in the Oval Office. Savir and Abu Alaa sent word that it would have to be resolved by the leaders. "So I explained it to Rabin and Arafat," Dennis Ross recalled. "It was very complicated. The two of them were looking at me—I knew that neither one understood the issue. Rabin then tried to explain it to Arafat; it was like he was truly talking to his partner. Arafat was saying, 'Yes, yes, yes.' " Ross then summoned Uzi Dayan to explain it to both leaders, and it was quickly resolved. What struck Ross, however, was the strength of the bond between Rabin and Arafat. And later, when Rabin came to the podium, following a lengthy speech by Arafat, Rabin commented that Jews were supposed to be great speechmakers, and he was now wondering whether Arafat might have some Jewish blood. (Arafat laughed delightedly.)

Regarding Rabin's change of attitude toward Arafat, General Yatom told me, "It was not a love affair, but he understood that he could count on him—for what it's worth—and that he's the man to do business with on the Israeli-Palestinian track. The attitude of Rabin toward Arafat became much more soft."

When Rabin was assassinated, a little more than a month later, Arafat was profoundly shaken. Larsen told me that he saw Arafat moments after he received the news that Rabin was dead, and Arafat was crying and trembling convulsively. Abu Mazen recalled that Arafat, weeping, said, "I lost my peacemaker. I lost a courageous man—this man who kept his word, and was strong enough to do what was in his mind." According to Uzi Dayan, Arafat gave an order to the Palestinian police to prevent Palestinians from celebrating Rabin's death. "He felt that he and Rabin had a shared destiny," Dayan commented. A few days after Rabin's death, Arafat—disguised in a big hat, a green overcoat, and Onassis-style oversized sunglasses—arrived at Rabin's home, in Tel Aviv, to pay a condolence call. This, in itself, was remarkable. Dayan said, "Two years before, if you would say that an Israeli leader would be killed for political reasons, and an Israeli widow would invite Arafat to visit her home, everyone would have said, 'Pure fiction.' " Arafat was very emotional, kissing Rabin's children and grandchildren, and calling Leah Rabin "my sister." Abu Alaa, who accompanied Arafat, told me that they were reminiscing with Leah Rabin about how it had all begun, and she recalled something Rabin had said as he made his painstaking, tortuous way toward Oslo: "Yitzhak told me, 'I should convince myself first, to be able to convince my people.' "

Al-Kidwa had been visiting Arafat at the time of Rabin's assassination, and,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surprised at Arafat's evident distress, had said to him, "Why carry on this way? O.K., Rabin is gone—but it will be *better* with Peres." Arafat's gloom, however, had not lifted. "I think he *realized* that Peres could not deliver," Al-Kidwa said.

III—ARAFAT ALONE

He immediately understood what Peres could not do.

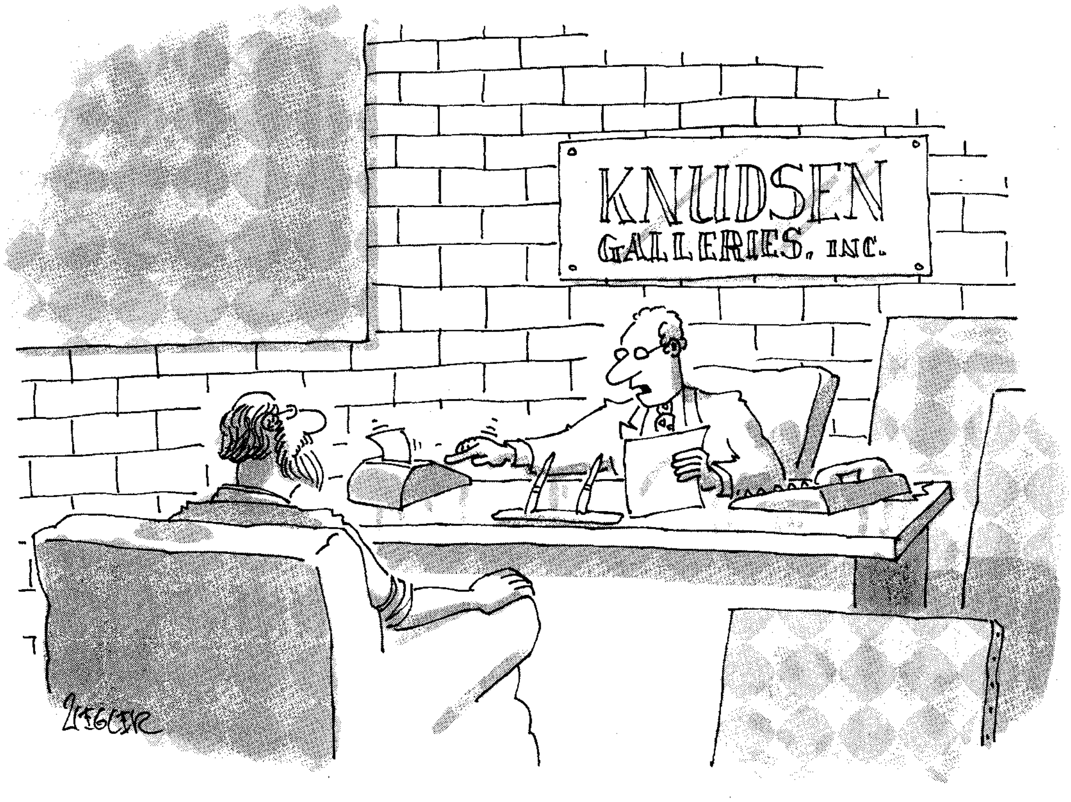
MOST of what the negotiators had designed in both Gaza-Jericho and Oslo II was to be put into effect by the military and security forces of the two sides. And, particularly in Oslo II, where the populations involved were so interlaced, where the agreement's map looked (as Abu Alaa said with distaste) "like a tiger skin," extensive coöperation between the two was mandated. The situation was highly problematic—as volatile, one might expect, between the two security forces as between the two populations whose security they were assigned to protect.

On the Israeli side, the troops were generally more hawkish than the upper levels of the military, and on the Palestinian side the ranks of the police and the security services contained many fighters from Arafat's Fatah movement. What Arafat did was "very clever," one of his associates from Tunis told me this summer. "A thousand Fatah Hawks were living for fighting Israelis. We'd told them, 'Throw Molotov cocktails, kill Israelis!' They were a whole generation who had been raised on this, they were very aggressive. Now they were let out of prison. You had to contain them. Pay them! Otherwise, they would be a threat to all others—Israelis and Palestinians." Thus, when the Israeli prison doors opened (as part of the accords) Arafat hired thousands of the newly released prisoners for his police and his security services. According to Gaza-Jericho, he was to have a police force of nine thousand; ultimately, however, the force numbered about thirty thousand.

Of those Palestinians who came of age in Israeli jails, Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Grinker, of the Israeli Army, said to me, "It was a wave. You cannot stop a wave." He explained, "They admire, fear, and hate us. . . . In jail, they studied us—they know us better than we know ourselves." He also said, "They learned from us our democracy. . . . They read, they discussed—everything from weaponry to higher mathematics and philosophy. We tried to discourage it. Sometimes we swept for books. But then they would memorize, too. What do you do—cut out the heart?"

At the start of the new era—jailer and prisoner no longer but colleagues—it was difficult, Grinker added. "In the beginning, we couldn't sit at the table with each other—the hate was too strong." Referring to a system of joint patrols that Dayan and others had devised, he said, "Our high-ranking officers said, 'No! I will not allow my soldiers to ride with four terrorists, armed with Kalashnikovs, before and behind!' "

Dayan was now in charge of carrying out the decisions of Oslo II; he had taken over General Biran's position as chief of the Central Command, covering the West Bank. Israeli troop withdrawals from six major West Bank cities and hundreds of villages and hamlets had begun in October of 1995, and were completed in about three months (except for the redeployment from Hebron, a special case); those areas were now under the control of Arafat's Palestinian Authority. Though the earlier I.D.F. experience in Gaza, which was led by Major General Matan Vilnai, was a far simpler operation, it had established some basic precepts. Commenting on Vilnai's approach, Grinker said, "The way he put it on the table, it was as though he had full confidence that it would work. . . . He was the one to calm down every argument, to lead the change in thinking." Using the metaphor that in Israel's intensely high-tech military culture comes up time and time again in conversations about the Israeli-Palestinian process, he added, "You have to put in a new diskette."



"At your opening, I see that you had two glasses of wine, eight pieces of cheddar, eight crackers, and seventeen grapes. That, of course, will have to come off the top of your end."

Colonel Moshe Elad, who is the head of the I.D.F.'s Regional Security Committee in the West Bank, had been the military governor of the West Bank city of Jenin, a hotbed of the *intifada*, from 1987 to 1991; then, for several years, he was the military governor of the Bethlehem area. When I interviewed him last June, just a few days after the Israeli elections, at a District Coördination Office in Bethlehem, he had been at his job for about ten months, and he evinced an optimism that at the time many Israelis shared. He told me, "The main road of this implementation is very clear for the Palestinians and for us. The more we work together, the more we are decreasing our hostility, our suspicion, our way of investigating each other. You can find some D.C.O.s with a very good relationship, others with more tension in the air—but everything that is associated with coördination, in fulfillment of this agreement, is clear. . . . What I'm feeling is, from the Palestinian side it is not reversible—they are so enthusiastic to achieve what is in their interest.”

“Just to be on the safe side, I'm putting both of us in the hospital.”

Elad said that when he returned to Israel in mid-1995, after spending a year at Harvard's Kennedy School, “it was a new phenomenon to see Palestinians at the Allenby Bridge—people whom I myself had taken to prison, in Jericho, five or six times,” and he recalled, “The first time I came to the Allenby Bridge, they made a reception for me. They called all the police together—some of them my ex-prisoners. We had coffee together, told some stories from the past. I was overwhelmed. That was the first time it came to my mind that we had to change our floppy disk.”

His Palestinian counterpart at that time, Colonel Ribhi Arafat (he is not related to the Chairman), had fought against the Israelis in the P.L.O. operation in 1982 in Lebanon, when Elad was commander of a unit in the Southern Command; now, this summer, Elad and Arafat were partners, on a hot line twenty-four hours a day. “There is no other place anywhere in the world where two armed forces are working in the same area,” Elad remarked. He seemed awed that such an accomplishment had been achieved in such an explosive situation. Early this year, in what he described to me as an experimental effort to break a taboo, Elad invited all the Palestinian commanders in the area to the Israeli military headquarters outside Ramallah—a massive, rather forbidding-looking fortress that, Elad said, “has been a symbol of the military occupation for the last twenty-eight years”—and was surprised and pleased when they accepted his invitation. Though it was not exactly according to the peace agreement, he said they could wear their uniforms. “But none of them came in uniform!” he said. “They all came in jacket and tie.”

Elad said he had asked himself, “How would I explain it to my soldiers? I'd always told them, ‘They are our enemy and we have to fight them.’ I had to explain, ‘We are going to receive here a couple of guys who were Fatah fighters.’ It was one of the most difficult issues for me. Those people who prepared the lunch—I heard they had huge problems to do it. . . . It was very difficult for everyone. We had soldiers living in Israeli areas of the West Bank. I saw one, and I said, ‘How do you feel?’ He said, ‘Awful.’ I said, ‘O.K., stand with me.’ ”

What he'd finally decided to tell his soldiers, Elad said, was this: “It's a new era now. We are soldiers. We have to carry out our mission. The Israeli government has decided, and we as soldiers have to implement it.” And he had added, “It's a sacred mission. Not everyone has the right to be in these historic days. Now we'll have to move on and do it.”

The suicide bombings last winter were viewed as a crucible, sorely testing not only the viability of the larger Oslo process but also the delicate structure that Elad and Ribhi Arafat were trying to build. “With every terror attack, it became harder,” he said. “I would call it a vertigo syndrome. You are trying to build good relationships between both sides . . . building another stone, another stone—and then something happens.”

In the aftermath of the suicide bombings, Peres, with less than three months to go before the elections, retaliated harshly. The Army imposed its punishing closures, sealing off the West Bank and Gaza, which, one security person explained to me, didn't “give a hundred-percent security, but you have to give people the *feeling* of security, and also it was sin and punishment.” Peres cut off all public contact with Yasir Arafat. Later, however, Savir and Abu Mazen met with members of both sides' security forces for weekly nightlong meetings at the Hyatt Hotel in Jerusalem, and they devised a system of much intensified sharing of information and coöperation in enforcement. Savir told me, “The Palestinians went into the social and religious infrastructure of Hamas, with the I.D.F. and the secret services.” Arafat's forces arrested hundreds of Hamas suspects, holding them without charges; there have been many confirmed reports of torture.

Referring to the measures that Arafat took after the bombings, General Shahak told me last spring, “It's true that they are doing much more. But why was it not done before? I think they made a terrible mistake back then.”

And when I told Abu Mazen, in June, what Shahak had said, he replied, “He's right. We admit that earlier it was not a strong effort. Earlier, we had a dialogue with Hamas, and tried to get them inside peacefully. . . . Then we realized we must eradicate them.” And he added, “It is for *our* prestige, *our* security. The Palestinian Authority should control its people. It is not to protect Israelis only.”

This had long been Yasir Arafat's dilemma: simultaneously to please the Israelis and yet not to be seen by his own people as Israel's enforcer. And, in the view of many Palestinians, just as Arafat, in his eagerness to please the Israelis, had come perilously close to crossing that line, so had those who had been carrying out his wishes, mainly in the security forces. Moreover, some saw this eagerness as not solely pragmatic but in part psychological—the desire of the former victim to ally himself with the oppressor. Jibril Rajoub, the head of Palestinian Preventative Security in the West Bank, is a rough type, who betrays a faint air of menace even when he is on his best behavior, and his operation has been criticized by Amnesty International for the use of torture. "They are exaggerating," Rajoub told me. "Instead of criticizing, they should come and educate." Rajoub rarely sees the press, but he agreed to see me, he told me, *only* because I had mentioned that I'd interviewed General Shahak. (The mention, first, of the names of various Palestinians had carried no weight.) "Amnon I like very much," he said warmly. "I respect him."

Such bonds were bound to be suspect. Some Palestinians suggested that the Israelis, who for many years had been adept at cultivating collaborators, were practicing a not very different kind of cultivation here. "The main weakness of the Palestinians now is that they want to please the Israelis," the poet Mahmoud Darwish asserted. "On the part of the victim, there is hatred and there is admiration." Concerning the affection that the Palestinians on the negotiating team developed for their Israeli counterparts, Darwish said, "They passed from enemies not to rivals but to brothers. They should have passed from enemies to rivals to partners to *maybe* friends—but that is not obligatory."

It is, however, the harsh measures of Yasir Arafat's security forces that have provoked the most severe condemnation. Raymonda Tawil, the mother of Arafat's wife, Suha, commented on the willingness of those recently victimized to adopt repressive measures themselves, saying, "It is classic. The Jews did it to the Palestinians in Israel. And some of them who were my friends would say, 'How could this be? We came out of the Holocaust, so how can it be that we would do such things?' 'But you are,' I told them. 'It is you.' " She added ruefully, "And now the Palestinians are following in their footsteps."

AFTER the Israeli elections, Arafat found himself suddenly without a partner. In the early days, the only continuing high-level communication between the Israelis and the Palestinians was between the military and security forces. No member of the Likud had ever met with anyone from the P.L.O.; the Likud leadership had forbidden it. Netanyahu made calls to other Arab leaders but not to Arafat. The day after the elections, when I saw Abu Alaa in his office at the Palestinian Council Building in Gaza (he was elected Speaker by the Palestinians last January), he was struggling to maintain his characteristic humor, but finally he said, "I smile, make jokes, but from inside I am crying. I cannot imagine a process without him. Rabin was not the leader of the peace process—he was the leader of the Israeli people. Peres was the leader of the peace process.

"If Uri needed blood, I'd give him mine—that's what it means to be a friend," he declared. "All these Israelis you can take as friends, some close friends. Now, in place of Uri, Joel, Peres, Yossi Beilin, Uzi Dayan, even Ilan Biran," Abu Alaa said, with a small smile, because of heated confrontations he'd had with Biran, "we have Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan. These, in the minds of the Palestinians, are killers! How will we sit on the other side of the table from them?"

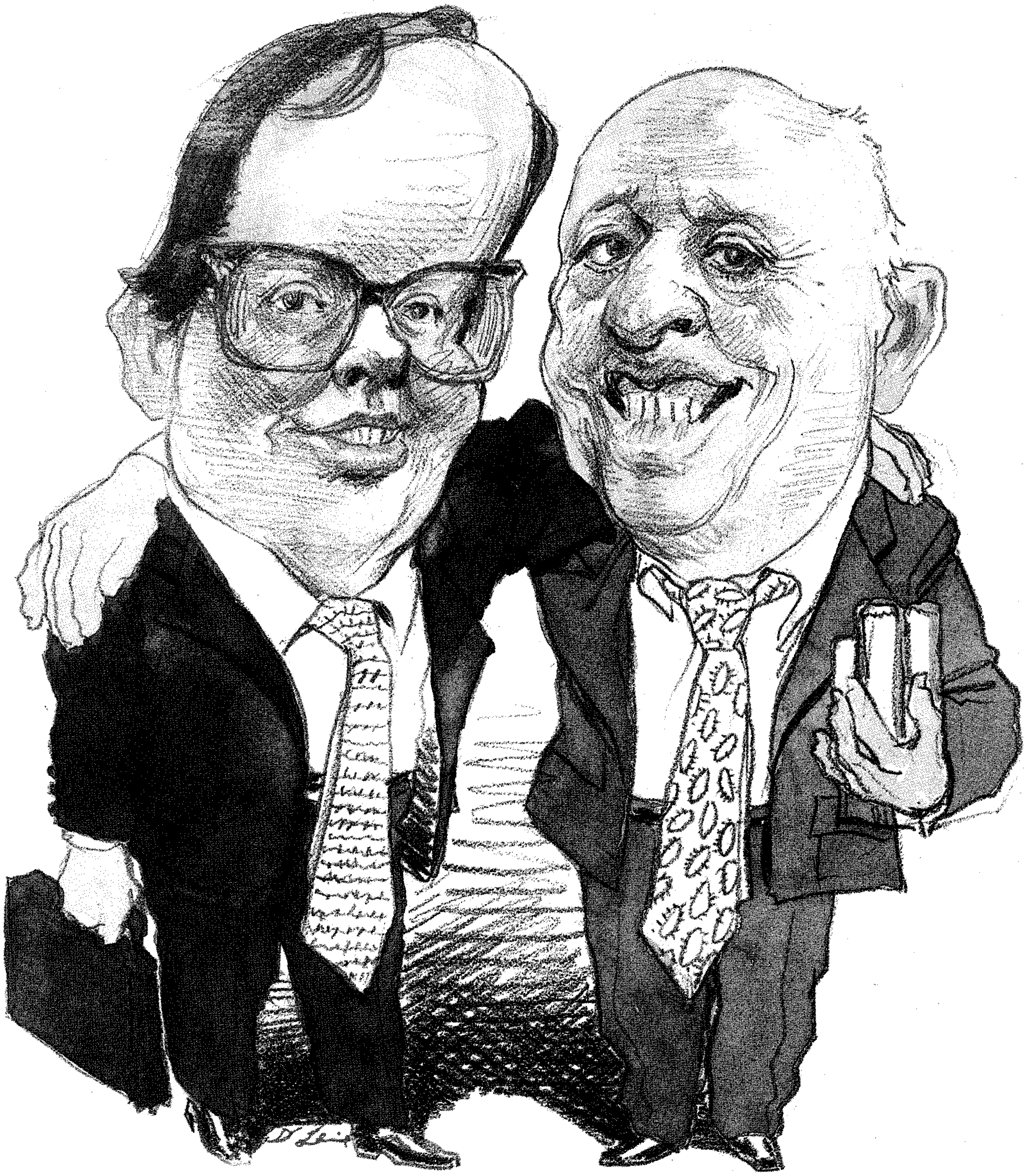
Several days later, Arafat, pale and shaky, appeared at an international donors' meeting at Terje Larsen's United Nations compound in Gaza, and told the assembled group, "We must continue the peace process—that is our message all around the world and especially to our partners, the Israelis. But you can't go to the dance alone," he said, with a faint smile. "You need a partner in the tango. We hope we will not go alone to the dance."

As the new government was formed, Israel seemed to be caught in a time warp. Taking seats in the cabinet were, among others, Ariel Sharon, who, according to an Israeli commission of inquiry, bore, as Minister of Defense, "personal responsibility" for not anticipating and taking steps to prevent the massacre of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps during Israel's disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon; Rafael Eitan, who had been Sharon's chief of staff at the time of the massacres; and Benny Begin. (Sharon was in an extraordinarily powerful position, cobbled together especially for him, as Minister of National Infrastructure, which would allow him to influence the status of the settlements, through the construction of highways and bypass roads.) In the light of the historic changes that had begun in the previous three years, these men seemed a kind of antediluvian throwback. The expansion of the settlements—which to the Palestinians spells the end of any peace, inasmuch as it makes the creation of a state with territorial integrity impossible—is something to which both Sharon and Eitan had dedicated themselves for many years. After Sharon resigned as Minister of Defense, in 1983, he became Housing Minister and was responsible for the construction of thousands of homes for Jewish settlers in the West Bank and in Gaza. That same year, Eitan formed a political party, Tsomet, dedicated to advancing the cause of Greater Israel. (As Shlomo Lahat, the former mayor of Tel Aviv, remarked, "Sharon and Eitan and Benny Begin are part of the peace movement, too—they want a piece of Egypt, a piece of Lebanon, a piece of Jordan, a piece of Syria!") And Eitan, just before he retired as chief of staff, in 1983, told a Knesset committee, "When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged cockroaches in a bottle."

Eitan, a simple, direct person, tends not to mince words. He told me that Americans are "naïve" and do not understand the Middle East—a popular view in Israel, especially on the right. "What happened here a hundred and fifty years ago is the same today. We are a strange culture in the middle of the Arab world . . . and their goal is to wipe out the strange culture. . . . In the struggle between cultures, you have two choices: to win or be wiped out. There are no choices. There is no compromise. Win or die." He went on, "Part of our country believes the Arabs. Part does not. . . . I don't want to take a chance. I don't want one day to say it was a mistake. I will wait—a hundred years, two hundred years, a thousand years."

He and Netanyahu, he continued, were "very similar" in their approach to what should be done regarding Oslo. "I realize the agreement is signed. Now we should stop, look at all the parts, check the whole agreement from the beginning—and see all the points where the Palestinians have not fulfilled their obligations."

In mid-June, I met with Begin, and what Eitan had strongly implied he stated directly. The agreements must be abrogated, based on the Palestinians' noncompliance (for example, Arafat's speeches for



Uri Savir found he had much in common with Abu Alaa: "We're both idealistic. Both are manipulative—especially him."

jihad). "We should say, 'Hey, guys, we signed an agreement with you in good faith. You ripped us off!' We have to protect our wives and our children!' " Begin declared. He was adamant that Netanyahu must not meet with Arafat. "Should Churchill have met with Hitler?" he demanded. And when I remarked to Begin that it was a little odd that Ariel Sharon had branded Arafat a terrorist and war criminal, considering Sharon's own history in the case of Sabra and Shatila, Begin—who has had his own public differences with Sharon—flared. "I am deeply offended! To compare any one of us to one of them!

"People say, 'You have to do business with Arafat, he's your only alternative,' " he continued. "I will not do business with him. The P.L.O. cannot be considered a partner. And you could see Mr. Peres striving to make him a partner when he knew he was not. . . . The public saw an over-effort on the part of the government to excuse Arafat for everything. They became the lawyers for Arafat. People felt there was an overt attempt to cover for Arafat." And that, Begin said, was why Peres had lost the election. "There was a basic mistrust of Arafat. We had built that mistrust—as Peres said—'with Benny Begin's quotations.' "

The terror, of course, had helped. As Begin commented, quite incisively, "If they had said from the start, 'There is terrorism, what can we do, it's life—' But they didn't say that. They promised it would be paradise.

"There will be no agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians," he predicted. "I think we have been able to derail Oslo."

IV—NETANYAHU AND ARAFAT

Could Israel have it all—the sweet without the bitter?

For many of Netanyahu's allies on the right—those who had brought him to power—the road ahead, which circled back to the past, to old racial hatreds, endless conflict, and a xenophobic isolation, was a return to normal. Netanyahu, however, had a more sophisticated, if difficult, course to chart. As Jerusalem's Mayor Ehud Olmert, an ally (and rival) of Netanyahu's, explained to me in early July, Netanyahu wanted to preserve the economic benefits that Oslo had brought Israel—the foreign investment, the improved relations with the Arab world—and to further bolster the economy, through privatization. What he decidedly did not want was a renewed *intifada*, this time with armed Palestinians. If Arafat would maintain security, then the Palestinians could keep the gains they had made. The notion Netanyahu had sold to a majority of the Israeli electorate, after all, was that he could provide a better peace, a cheaper peace, a peace without terror, where Israelis would not have to give up what they did not want to, because the Palestinians—realizing that *this* Israeli government did not flinch from exercising its rights and exerting its might—would settle for less.

Thus, Israel essentially would have it all—the sweet without the bitter. The critical link of Oslo—in which Israeli and Palestinian leaders were interdependent, the success or failure of one linked to that of the other—would be broken. Arafat would be subject rather than partner—even more diminished than he had already been, perhaps so shrunken that Netanyahu's constituency would, finally, tolerate his existence.

Netanyahu was attempting a delicate balance. In public pronouncements and messages to foreign leaders, he struck a mainly moderate chord, stating that he intended to uphold Israel's commitments in the Oslo process; meanwhile, he delayed any implementation of outstanding commitments, and delayed the resumption of permanent-status negotiations. He also delayed meeting with Arafat, prompting prolonged speculation in Israel about whether he would go through with a meeting at all, and freezing Arafat in position as a supplicant. He did, however, proffer small encouragements—sending his foreign-affairs adviser, Dore Gold, and then his Foreign Minister, David Levy, to meet with Arafat.

In Israel, this level of stasis bred uncertainty and confusion about the new Prime Minister's intentions. His image—upon which the Israeli public was fixated—became a kind of universal Rorschach; those more pessimistic and mistrustful (on the right) tended to see in him someone who might be about to betray his faithful by going the way of Rabin and Peres, or (on the left) someone who was merely giving lip service to the Oslo peace process, while stalling with an intent to destroy it.

Netanyahu's susceptibility to such divergent interpretation was probably due to a number of factors. He attained this post at a young age—he is forty-six—with a relatively negligible track record (in marked contrast to his seasoned predecessors); and he had always been so media-savvy, so adept at sound bites and sloganeering (a trait cultivated during many years he spent in the United States), that he at least *appeared* to be without depth or, perhaps, core beliefs. Some were convinced that his pragmatism outweighed his ideology, and some the reverse.

What was not open to question was Netanyahu's singular aptitude for long-range planning and political calculation, which had made possible his success. Those who regarded him dismissively—like Rabin and, later, Peres and a host of others—did so at their peril. David Bar-Illan, Netanyahu's media adviser and close aide, told me, "People tend to underestimate Netanyahu—but his meteoric rise is unprecedented in this country. He was a furniture salesman, to be rough about it; then deputy chief of mission"—appointed by Moshe Arens in 1982, when Arens was Israel's Ambassador to Washington—and then United Nations Ambassador. "Then he became head of the Party, from a post abroad—incredible that he could, without having done anything in the Party until he became the head. Afterward, he did a lot. Then he went against Party discipline and bolted to vote for the direct election of the Prime Minister . . . and then won it! It's like a fairy tale."

In Netanyahu's early days in office, there were signs that his overcoming of massive odds had impressed no one more than himself. When he made his first trip to the United States, in early July, "he was *very* full of himself," one American official commented; another American official is said to have remarked that in meetings with Clinton and Christopher Netanyahu "acted like *he* was the superpower." Moshe Arens, who had raised Netanyahu from obscurity and has continued to be his booster over the years, told me, "The U.S. was against him, the Europeans were against him, the Arabs—the whole world had been against him, and he'd won! He had such overwhelming confidence at that point—he felt he was a giant killer."

Reality, however, intruded. Relations with Syria were terrible, and relations with Egypt were at their lowest point in many years. The stock exchange had plummeted, the deficit ballooned. Netanyahu kept announcing ambitious plans—the formation of a Council of Economic Advisers and a National Security Council, for example—which failed to materialize when his ministers rebelled. Even his supporters were questioning whether he was up to the job. When I spoke with Arens, in late August, he said of Netanyahu's tenure, "At first, many people were well impressed—his trip to the U.S. was successful; to Mubarak also. He sent his foreign-affairs adviser, Gold, to Arafat; he said the right things about the economy. If the election had been held in July, I think he would have done better than he did in late May. But in the last three weeks his appointments are not going well, he looks like he's vacillating—and it's true. He *has* pulled back from things he's announced." And the Jerusalem *Post*, which strongly supported Netanyahu's election, ran an editorial on August 29th that began, "Three months after his electoral victory, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's initial lack of detailed, coherent, and long-term operating plans is exacting an increasingly high price—politically, economically, and now also diplomatically."

If Netanyahu seemed buffeted by forces beyond his control, probably none was exerting more pressure on him than the Oslo process. For his delay was threatening to exact a prohibitive price—on the paramount issue of security, upon which he had campaigned. According to two of his close advisers, David Bar-Illan and Dore Gold, Netanyahu had been surprised to learn upon his election just how strong and vital the coöperation between the Israeli and the Palestinian security services had become, mainly since the suicide bombings. Indeed, an American official told me that immediately after the election Netanyahu was warned by the head of the Shin Bet, the domestic-security agency, that “the terror would come back if that coöperation wasn’t continued.”

Thus Netanyahu began a subtle shift in presentation: the lethal and unforgivable error of the previous government was not that it had entrusted Israel’s security to Arafat but, rather, that it had failed to demand of Arafat a consistent level of performance. Netanyahu was now doing that; it was the message that all his emissaries, including American officials, were conveying to Arafat.

To the Palestinians, Netanyahu’s only actions were negative; most inflammatory were announcements that existing settlements would be expanded. Even if Arafat had had the will to comply with Netanyahu’s demands, his capability was being sorely tested. By August, according to an American official, Israeli security services “were ringing alarm bells about how the closure” of the West Bank and Gaza borders “and the lack of movement in this process were creating a dangerous environment in the territories—not only creating an environment for terror but reducing the ability of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority to deal with it, because Arafat and the P.A. are the target of Palestinian anger.” The official went on, “The Shin Bet came to the Prime Minister and said, ‘You’re creating a disaster.’ ”

Arafat’s popularity, and his authority, had been declining rapidly. In early August, there were riots in the West Bank, following the death of a Palestinian who had been tortured by Palestinian security forces, and the death of a protester shot by them. (An Israeli security source told me that although these riots probably erupted spontaneously, Hamas had helped incite the unrest.) Khalil Shikaki, the director of the Center for Palestine Research and Studies, in Nablus, who has long criticized Arafat for his “authoritarian practices,” told me that last November or December Arafat had the support of sixty to seventy per cent of the Palestinian population. “He was a hero,” Shikaki said. He estimated that Arafat’s support before the latest fighting was somewhere between a third and a half.

Arafat’s problems with his own people were probably due as much to his regime, with its allegedly widespread corruption and overt repression, as to the economic hardship that the peace process has produced. But there was a growing perception among Palestinians that he had become more sensitive to Israel’s priorities than to theirs. In August, he had acquiesced to Israeli demands that the Palestinian Authority close down offices in East Jerusalem and get Jibril Rajoub to cease his security activities there—a highly charged issue, since anything the Palestinian Authority did in Jerusalem was seen as establishing a foothold. These moves were met not with a conciliatory gesture by Netanyahu’s government but with hostile actions, including the demolition of a Palestinian-owned building in the Old City. Arafat, infuriated, retaliated. In the last week of August, he called for a general strike and a demonstration at Jerusalem’s Temple Mount. It was the first protest against Israeli policies he had organized since the Oslo accords were signed.

Netanyahu may have appeared intransigent at the time, but a few weeks earlier, evidently concerned about the increasingly volatile situation, he had authorized a secret group of meetings headed by Dore Gold on one side and Abu Mazen on the other, and facilitated by Terje Larsen. Their goal was to reach an agenda of the outstanding issues; once that agenda was in hand, the two leaders would meet.

When I spoke to Gold on September 1st, and asked him to describe his experiences with the Palestinians in this back channel, he appeared to have been infected at least to a degree by the peace process. He told me he believed in the principle of interdependence that had

“Joe, the beautiful people are back from their summer places. Would you mind not coming in anymore?”

been forged during the creation of the original agreement, roughly three years earlier: “We see we’re stuck in the same boat together. Maybe we wouldn’t want to be there, but we are. Arafat is there, our security is dependent on him. We could go back in and take over, but that’s not an option we want. Now we don’t see everything in zero-sum terms.”

Of Arafat, Gold said, “He did something *amazing* for us. He closed those offices, and he told Jibril Rajoub to get out of Jerusalem. It was part of the deal that we not publicize it about Jibril, because that’s very controversial, and we don’t want to rub their noses in it.” As for Arafat’s subsequent call for a strike, Gold said, “He felt he *had* to,” after such concessions. This, of course, was precisely how Peres and his team had interpreted Arafat’s incendiary speech following his most humiliating concession.

Gold did seek to differentiate himself from his predecessors, saying, “I don’t lose perspective when I meet Arafat. I remember what he’s done. I’m never going to get into the Jacuzzi together with him. For the left, it was exciting, it was like hanging a Che Guevara poster in your home.” But when I asked about his impression of Abu Mazen, the Palestinian with whom he dealt the most, he responded warmly: “Abu Mazen is like Palestinian nobility. He is a man of great substance—plus he has the revolutionary background, so he has the credentials.”

DIMINUENDO

Everything was clear, and nothing much
the better for it.
They agreed it was a matter of caring,

and each felt the dull courage that comes
from caring less.
They weren’t going to bring up Avalon,

that shore town where they first met,
or doing ninety
in the country with the top down:

these were among the unreachables; emblems
of how they felt
once, about each other and a few

lambent afternoons. They leaned back
in their chairs
at the café, neither fully present

nor gone, his mind cut loose
from his heart
like a dinghy in cold, still water.

PERSONAL rapport does not necessarily translate into political compromise. And a major test of the Netanyahu government’s good-faith approach to the accords will be its handling of the three stages of further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. The agreement states that by the start of the third phase, next September, most of the West Bank territory—except for settlements and “specified military locations”—is to be ceded to the Palestinians. Gold told me at the beginning of September that the new government had not yet made a decision about how to proceed. When I asked him about the ultimate outcome, he said that the agreement did not specify exactly how much territory the Israelis’ “specified military locations” will cover (the source of Abu Alaa’s unending dismay), and noted that in the three phases “we can give one-half acre, one-half acre, one-half acre.”

The only substantive issue that the back-channel group had attempted to resolve was the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, a city sacred to both Jews and Muslims. From a secular standpoint, however, it is a blighted place, with a tiny Jewish population and a large Palestinian one, both made up of religious fundamentalists. Their hatred of one another is palpable; in this century, there have been massacres on both sides.

If the Israeli military’s departure from Gaza was simple compared with that from the West Bank cities, then the departure from those cities was simple next to Hebron. Hebron is the last city on the West Bank that is still under Israeli military authority. According to Oslo II, the Israeli soldiers were to turn over their military headquarters, a fortress on a hill in the ancient city, to the Palestinian police and move to another location, from which they would provide security for the four hundred or so Jewish settlers. Peres had delayed the scheduled withdrawal after the suicide bombings, and had bequeathed it to his successor as a “hot potato,” as Netanyahu likes to say.

It is especially “hot” for Netanyahu because the issue is one that the settlers are feverish about, and they are a critical part of his core constituency. They went all out for him in the election, mounting the anti-Labor demonstrations, and arguably won him the job. He will need them again the next time. One of their leaders, Yisrael Harel, told me before the recent clashes that he was convinced that Netanyahu would shortly allow this redeployment to take place—contrary to his earlier promises. “I had every reason to believe that the day after he was elected he would come out and say the following: ‘We are a civilized nation, but there are certain matters which, if we follow, then we will lose our identity. Jews all through history prayed to return to Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem. If we do not stay there, the memory of our nation will be lost. Our songs, our poems were bound to those places. Once we give up those places, we are not anymore Jews and Israelis.’ ” Harel continued, “So much has happened to us, but we never gave away part of our homeland. For the first time in Jewish history, a Jewish government is going to give up parts of the land of Israel to another nation.”

When I met with Abu Mazen, Arafat’s No. 2, in early September, at his heavily guarded office in a ramshackle building in a residential section of Ramallah, he said that they had not been able to reach an agreement on Hebron in the back-channel discussions because the Palestinians—who had agreed to make certain modifications to improve security

And she felt the weight of caring
had been lifted
from her. She felt she would soon know

a freedom some of her friends knew,
unmoored,
a hundred options in a bittersweet dark.

It was late August. Neither blamed anything
on how the soul idles
in that relentless hum of days.

Everything's true, they agreed, smiling;
if something didn't
happen, it certainly would in time.

A black fly landed in her hair, and he
swept it away.
A sudden breeze uplifted their napkins,

but that was all there was of action.
It was time to go;
one of them, soon, would say so.

—STEPHEN DUNN

arrangements in Hebron—refused to reopen the agreement. The Israelis wanted to change the provisions of the agreement so that the Jewish community would be able to build in Hebron, and grow. "We said we would be very flexible on security demands. We are eager for their security. . . . If there is an explosion, it will be big, and it will tear this apart. But we don't have to modify the agreement to do that. We cannot accept any modifications, even if it is a comma," because "then there will be no agreements."

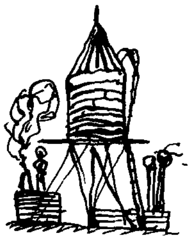
He continued, "In Hebron, as long as the Jewish community is there, there will be friction every day." And the expansion of the Jewish community in Hebron would mean "fences and towers," he added, alluding to the rolled-barbed-wire fences that surround the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and the adjacent watchtowers, from which I.D.F. soldiers gaze down into neighboring Palestinian villages and refugee camps. "You cannot have peace with fences and towers."

In listening to Abu Mazen, it struck me that for the Palestinians it was as though the last three years had not happened. Abu Mazen remarked that some of his new Israeli counterparts refer to "Judea and Samaria"—the Biblical names for the West Bank, which have generally been used by Israelis who claim these lands as their patrimony, opposing territorial compromise. "They should adhere to the agreement—it says 'West Bank,' " Abu Mazen pointed out. I asked what the negotiators' use of that terminology meant to him. Abu Mazen shrugged, and replied, "It means we will return back to the beginning. But we are patient. We *have* to be patient. We will wait. Now at least we are dealing with the other half of the Israeli population."

ABU MAZEN, who told me in early September he was hopeful that he and his new Israeli counterparts would grow nearer to one another as they continued to meet ("I believe meetings make miracles"), struggled mightily to bring about the first Netanyahu-Arafat encounter, which took place on September 4th. That the process was so arduous was "a manifestation of the level of distrust" between these Israelis and Palestinians, Dennis Ross told me. The two sides were not substantively very far apart in their proposed agendas of how to proceed, but, he continued, every word was a struggle: "It followed the pattern of Labor. The pattern has been throughout that you get things done only when you look like you're on the brink of not being able to do it—the difference being that this was only an agenda."

This time, the last-minute crisis was prompted by an external event. On September 3rd, the day before the meeting between Netanyahu and Arafat was scheduled to take place, an article appeared in the Palestinian press in which the writer stated that Netanyahu was "worse than a Nazi." Terje Larsen relayed a message from the Israelis to the Palestinians that Netanyahu was very upset, and that they should issue a corrective statement. Abu Mazen suggested that Arafat apologize to Netanyahu in a phone conversation, and the Israelis agreed.

On the morning of the proposed meeting day, Arafat placed the call—only to be told that Netanyahu was in an inner-cabinet meeting and could not be disturbed. Whether this was an intentional delay because the agenda was not yet completed or an administrative blunder, Arafat seems to have felt that it was yet another purposeful slight, capping the public humiliation he had endured in more than two months of waiting. He went off to take his afternoon nap. In midafternoon, the Israelis sent a message to the Palestinians that Netanyahu would not go to the meeting if he did not receive another call from Arafat. Some of Arafat's aides went into his bedroom, woke him, and pleaded with him to call Netanyahu again; he refused and went back to sleep. By 4 P.M., a compromise between the frantic negotiators was struck. The call was initiated, with what one observer called "intricate diplomatic maneuvers," from the Prime Minister's office; Arafat came to the phone; then Netanyahu got on the line. Abu Mazen, who confessed that he was listening on another extension, told me, "It was warm! Arafat said, 'I do not accept any insult to anybody—how can I accept an insult to you, my neighbor and partner?' " Abu Mazen, who seemed to have tried to commit the conversation to memory, word for word, continued, "And Netanyahu said, 'Mr. Chairman, I respect you as a leader. I will deal with you as a leader. We will make something together which makes those who oppose the peace process disappointed.' "



Surprisingly promising words, much like those Netanyahu had been uttering from time to time as a substitute for action, but now, once again, they were only words. The September 4th meeting with Arafat amounted to little more than a perfunctory handshake. The next several weeks, leading up to the violence in Jerusalem, would bring no resolution on any issue on the agenda. Instead, the government would announce further plans for the construction of new units in West Bank settlements.

When I met with Netanyahu, on the eve of his first meeting with Arafat, he seemed altogether like the candidate I remembered from his campaign—projecting an extreme self-assurance, glib, plainly pleased by his verbal smoothness and the ease in English that his years in the United States had given him, careless with his use of hyperbole, comfortably delivering a polished script (the same words he would utter if he were to talk in his sleep, one imagines, so programmed does he appear).

What was most striking was how unsuitable these particular skills seemed for the difficulties Netanyahu now confronted. He suggested, however, that approaches that had served him well in the past continued to do so. He compared his system of focussing on long-term goals to an experience he'd had when he was a soldier in a legendary Israeli commando unit, Sayeret Matkal. "One day, they said, 'You're going to have to learn how to dive.' They took us to the base of the Naval Command and thrust us into the middle of the Mediterranean in the middle of the winter—very stormy seas, with gales and waves. And I discovered that when you get below the surface it's much calmer. You put your hand like this"—he extended his arm—"focus your compass, and just go, proceed to your target while all this is going on above you. It's more or less a model in many ways of the way I've been working, since well before politics. Fix a goal—sometimes you have to move a little leftward, a little rightward, but, invariably, fix your direction, and you get there."

Implicitly dismissing the criticism of his performance in the Israeli press, Netanyahu added, "Most of the turmoil you see, ask yourself will it matter in three weeks, and the answer is no. . . . So I'm less inclined to deal with it. I deal with where I want to go, and I have a very clear direction of where I want to go."

His office seemed to have bestowed on him no newfound grace. Rather than betray any hint of regret for the fierceness of his attacks on both Rabin (whose widow blamed him for Rabin's death) and Peres, Netanyahu repeatedly referred derisively to "the previous government," and sought, again and again, to contrast what he cast as his success with its failures. Describing Arafat's compliance with his demand to close the offices in Jerusalem, he said, "I sat where you're sitting, Rabin sat here—I must've been here five or six times—and I said, 'Yitzhak, they're carving up Jerusalem, you know that.' He said, 'Well, we're going to shut it up.' I said, 'When?' 'In a few weeks.' And this would repeat itself every few months, and those offices continued to operate, and now within six weeks we've done what they hadn't done in three years." It was, of course, Netanyahu's insistent aggressiveness on Jerusalem that led to the disaster of the tunnel.

Netanyahu expounded at length on the issue of security and again argued that he had succeeded where both Rabin and Peres had failed. In making this argument, Netanyahu performed the forensic maneuver that had been so successful during his campaign: taking a partial truth and exaggerating it to make a case that is unfair but requires a complicated rebuttal. "Arafat basically did practically nothing," he declared. "One thing I've discovered since I came into this office is that they"—the Palestinians—"did nothing, *nothing*," up until the suicide bombings. "And this was camouflaged and excused and whitewashed every possible way. And because it was whitewashed on the Israeli side there was no incentive on their part to do anything. Nobody really demanded it.

"Terror is *not* a fact of life," Netanyahu continued, making a distinction between, say, a Palestinian's attacking an Israeli with a knife and the highly organized suicide bombings. "In fact, it's quite the opposite. This terror was something that could be stopped, and the fact is, once the P.A. began to live up to its obligations, it stopped it. It's stopped!

"Now, what we were trying to do was first of all communicate to Arafat—and I think we've succeeded in this so far—that this is not episodic. . . . We're not going to go back to where you guys use this Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorism as a means of pressure against Israel. That's not going to work." Rather heatedly, Netanyahu went on, "And if you do that, all bets are off. Because this isn't peace. We're not blind, we're not stupid, and we're not playing the game of the previous government. Arafat understands that it's a different government."

Netanyahu emphasized that he was fixed, as ever, on long-term goals, which for the Oslo track means those supremely rending issues which are the subject of permanent-status negotiations—Jerusalem, borders, refugees, settlements. "I think, at the close of this century, we need a new model of how to deal with nationalities embedded in the territory of other nationalities. There are two existing models. One is subjugation. We reject it. The other is what the Palestinians are proposing, and the people on the Israeli left are saying, 'Yes, yes, yes'—they don't even think about it—'if they want sovereignty they must have sovereignty.'

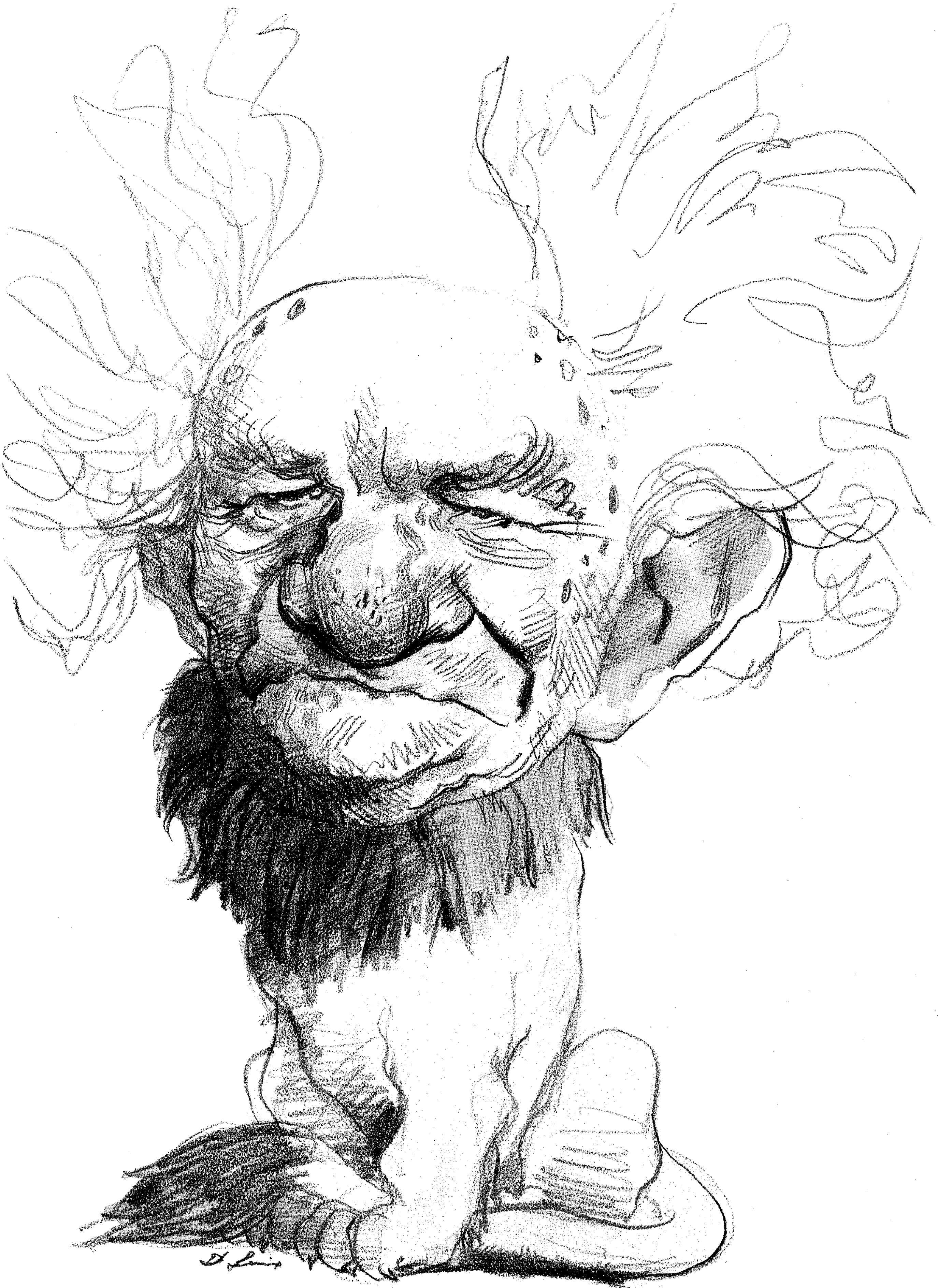
"I propose a different solution: that we have, if you will, a very generous autonomy in which there basically are self-governing authorities, with the exception of certain sovereign powers, which remain with, if you will, the parent, the sovereign country—which specifically include security, control of borders, control of airspace, and so on. And everything else is theirs," Netanyahu concluded, without any sense of irony. He was proposing, essentially, that the Israeli version of implementation of the Declaration of Principles—with all the limitations that Arafat had acceded to, for the *interim* period, following his disastrous first session with Rabin—should be the final one. And—judging by both his statements and his emerging pro-growth policy on settlements in the West Bank—one may surmise that he is loath to fulfill the territorial commitments already made in Oslo II (as Dore Gold put it, "one-half acre, one-half acre, one-half acre").

What Netanyahu had outlined was a radical dwarfing of the Palestinian aspiration, even the aspiration embodied in Oslo, which was itself a dramatic diminution—the "small hope" in place of the "great dream."

V—ISRAEL ALONE?

"Hostilities are so simple, and rapprochements are so complicated."

In Netanyahu's famously successful campaign ad, the shot of Arafat leading Peres by the hand was immediately preceded by the shattering of a glass—suggesting Peres's wanton destruction of his country's security, by consorting with Israel's purported enemy. After the ter-



David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founder and first Prime Minister, warned Peres that "a dead Einstein is not a genius."

rible events of the last week of September, those images returned to mind, but they evoked something quite different—the shattering of an embryonic peace, a fragile organism that had begun to grow, miraculously, out of a partnership between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and, at the most fundamental level, between the Israeli and Palestinian security forces whose job it was to carry out together the implementation of this process.

Three months earlier, Colonel Moshe Elad had spoken with hope about the forces' coöperation, but he had also described the "vertigo syndrome"—in which one builds, stone by stone, and then that structure is shaken by some event. Elad now told me that he had never imagined Palestinian police shooting at I.D.F. soldiers. "*Nobody* expected that something like that could happen, after one year of full coöperation, drinking coffee and fighting terrorism together, as we have done."

The shooting had begun at the Israeli checkpoint in southern Ramallah, where, on September 25th, "about a hundred and fifty to two hundred Palestinians came to the barrier to demonstrate against the tunnel," Elad said. "When they came close to the Israeli soldiers, the soldiers were in alarm." He spoke to his Palestinian counterpart. "He told me something that astonished me. He said, 'Well, we are not going to prevent our people from demonstrating on a very just issue.'

"I saw it as a turning point," Elad continued. "Up until that point, any time we had warned them that we were going to face a problem, *immediately* they sent their troops to make it positive. It was the first time it happened that they didn't want to prevent it. And then this ritual"—of commanders refusing to intercede—"happened all over the West Bank."

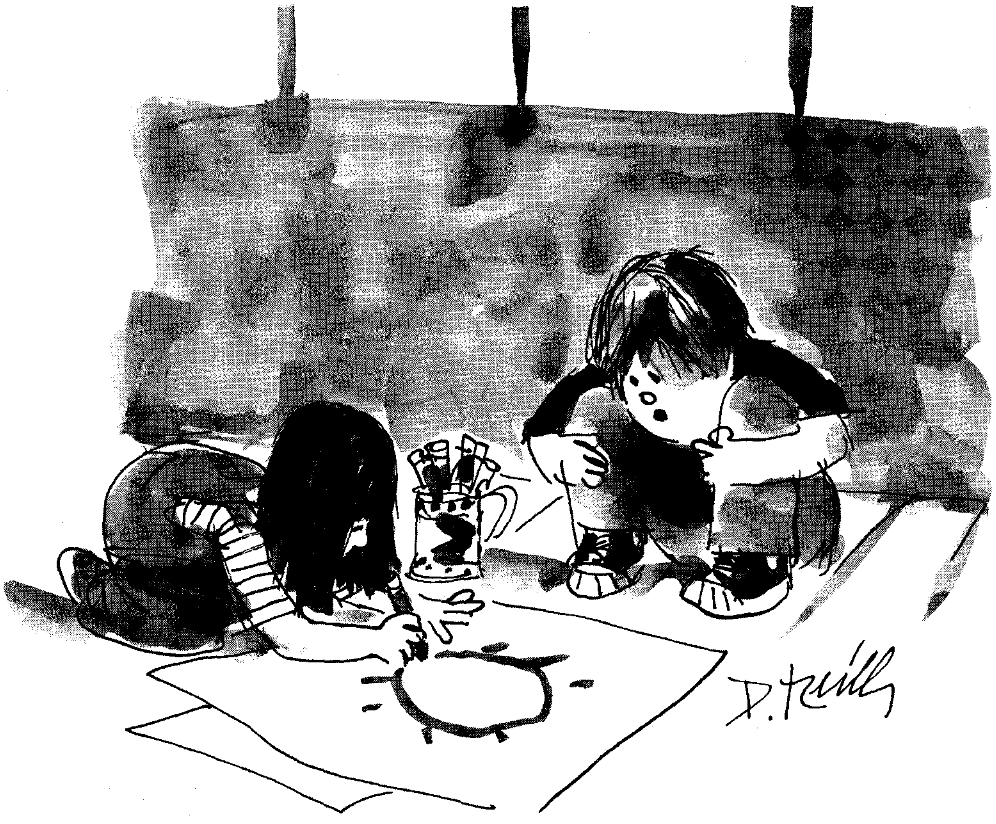
According to Elad, the first shot from a Palestinian policeman was "spontaneous"; then the phenomenon spread to other towns. Referring to "testimony" from the Palestinian policemen, he said, "They have said they were very frightened from the crowd, that there was a very big pressure on them. In this incident"—in Ramallah—"they had about eighty to eighty-five people injured," from I.D.F. firing. (Palestinian doctors said that the number was three times that.) "Their point of view is that everything they did was right, they had the right to protect themselves. I do not ignore their dilemma, but it could have been prevented. That answer, from my counterpart—'I am not going to prevent it'—I know him very well, I know from how he speaks, when it is coming from his boss, and when it is his answer."

In the week following the violence, the I.D.F. continued to seal off the West Bank. Palestinians were prevented from moving from town to town, and Israeli tanks were poised on the towns' outskirts. Joint patrols in the West Bank were suspended; everything was, essentially, in abeyance as the Palestinians waited to see if the Washington summit, hastily arranged by President Clinton, would produce results, and the I.D.F. waited to see if new violence would erupt.

Even if there were to be a political resolution, Elad said, it wasn't clear how the joint patrols could continue. "People were killed. People are in hospitals, injured. How can we sit in the same vehicles together? . . . If we get the order, we will carry it out. But we are people."

The Palestinian police seemed somewhat more ready to resume normal relations. "They call and say, 'When are we starting the joint patrols?' " Elad said. Although the Palestinian police suffered casualties, the episode carried some benefit for them: their people no longer tended to view them as Israel's enforcers. For someone like Elad, however, who worked during the past year to construct this system of coöperation, the disappointment was "very great." So was the trauma. "I look at a newspaper picture, and there is a Palestinian policeman, in a red beret, firing. When I would go to their Ramallah headquarters, he was the one escorting me. I leaned on him very much. Now I am wondering whether I should go to their headquarters."

The question of Israeli-Palestinian security coöperation—especially in the fight against terror—is not one that can remain in limbo. In the days after the riots, according to the Israeli government, there were a number of attempted acts of terror by Muslim fundamentalist groups—who must realize that now, in this climate of Palestinian rage, they may be hailed by much of the population. Israeli security officials warned that the risk of attacks remained high. So did the risk of more general rioting and vio-



"I only draw with software."

Handelsman

"Stalking is now a felony in this state, Miriam."

• •

lence on the part of the Palestinians, who were angry that Arafat had returned from the summit empty-handed.

NETANYAHU had made some rhetorical gestures in Washington. At one of the meetings, which lasted three and a half hours, he and Arafat are said to have referred to each other as "my partner and my friend," and to have exchanged war stories. (They had fought on opposite sides in a battle in 1968.) And they agreed to hold further negotiations. Immediately after the summit, Netanyahu told reporters that he was committed to a redeployment in Hebron—though he refused to set a timetable for it. He said, "I want to assure you about our commitment to peace," and added, perhaps recalling his underwater maneuvers in the military, "This is our compass." Two days later, he ordered Israeli tanks pulled back in the West Bank.

Nevertheless, the amount of damage done to the peace process had been severe. As Chemi Shalev wrote in the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv*, commenting on Netanyahu's hundredth day in office, even the Prime Minister's strongest critics were shocked at the free fall. In his campaign, Netanyahu had ridiculed Peres's "new Middle East"; but he had managed, in short order, to revive the "old Middle East." Shalev continued, "The international community is united in its criticism of Israel, the Arab world fierce in its hatreds, and Israelis and Palestinians are killing each other in the cities of the West Bank."

When I saw Uri Savir, a few days before the summit, he predicted that Israeli and Palestinian security forces would be able to resume their coöperation, and he dismissed any suggestion that the breakdown might reflect a fundamental flaw in the peace process. He blamed Netanyahu's government, saying, "They did not implement a single article in the agreement. You don't kill the agreement and then ask, 'Why is it dead?' "

When I met with Peres the following day, he seemed newly purposeful. He was hoping that the opportunity for a national-unity government—one in which he would return to the peace process—might arise in the coming months. He acknowledged, though, that he had no panacea. "Peace is not a pleasant experience," he said. "It is very difficult, very costly." When I asked how one might deal with the psychological damage done by the sight of Palestinian policemen firing on Israeli soldiers—damage not only to the soldiers, like Elad and his troops, but to the Israeli public—he paused for a long moment, and then said, "Well, it's very difficult, because hostilities are so simple, and rapprochements are so complicated."

In the Oslo process, of course, it was rapprochement that Peres had consistently advocated, sought, and achieved. Not long before the recent eruption of violence, an American official was drawing a distinction between the forces that had brought Peres to this course and those that, he argued at the time, would ultimately bring Netanyahu to it. "Peres and some of the people around him came to peace through a moral lens—they shouldn't be occupying another people. And *then* Peres not only felt that it was a moral imperative but . . . saw the economic potential. I think Netanyahu comes to it from an economic standpoint. . . . He wants to 'grow' the economy," and for that "he needs an environment of peace." This official concluded, "He can't practice economic integration with the world and be unilateralist in his practices. So it's a different starting point, same end point."

Perhaps. But what animated the Oslo process—and what made the seemingly impossible possible—was precisely that moral commitment. In Oslo, the Israelis (none more than Peres) extracted concession after concession from the Palestinians, unquestionably overpowering them; these were not altruists at work. But they did not see the Palestinians as a lesser order of being. They did not, like Benny Begin, consider it offensive that one should compare "any one of us to one of them." They were not impervious to the suffering the Palestinians had endured under the Israeli occupation. And they did not see them as unruly subjects for whom some small, spotty parcel ("one-half acre") of their homeland should suffice.

What is at stake today is not only the spilling of more "blood and tears," in the emotional words of Rabin at the Oslo signing, and not only the Palestinians' nationalist dream, but also, and in a sense even more profoundly, the Israelis'. If Netanyahu does not shed the credo that brought him to power, Israel may well succeed for a time in keeping most of the West Bank ("Judea and Samaria") for its own; but what is truly irreplaceable—its original, galvanizing ideal—will be lost. As David Ben-Gurion foresaw, "The state of Israel will not be tried by its riches, army, or technology, but by its moral image and human values." ♦

FICTION

THE STACK

Are socks for your birthday grounds for divorce?

BY ROSE TREMAIN

SHE says to him, "On your birthday, McCreedy, what d'you want to do?"

She always calls him McCreedy. You'd have thought by now, after being his wife for so long, she'd have started to call him John, but she never does. He calls her Hilda; she calls him McCreedy, like he was a stranger, like he was a footballer she'd seen on the telly.

"I don't know," he says. "What'll we do, then?"

"Forty-six," she says, "you'd better think of something."

"Go out . . . ?" he says.

"Out where?"

The pub, he thinks but doesn't say. With the fellas from work. Get the Guinness down. Tell some old Dublin jokes. Laugh till you can't laugh anymore.

"What'd the kids like?" he says.

She lights a ciggie. Her twentieth or thirtieth that Sunday, he's stopped counting. Smoke pours out of her mouth, thick and blue. "Never mind the kids, McCreedy," she says. "It's your fuckin' birthday."

"Go back to Ireland," he says. "That's what I'd like. Go back there for good."

She stubs out the ciggie. She's always changing her mind about everything, minute to minute. "When you've got a sensible answer," she says, "let me know what it is."

And she leaves him, click-clack on her worn-out heels, pats her hair tidy, opens the kitchen door, and lets it slam behind her.

McCreedy stares at the ashtray. Time she was dead, he thinks. Time the smoking killed her.

HE goes out into the garden where his nine-year-old daughter, Katy, is playing on her own.

Katy and the garden have something in common: they're both small and it looks like they'll never be beautiful, no matter how hard anyone tries. Because Katy resembles her dad. Short neck. Short sight. Pigeon toes. More's the pity.

Now the two of them are in the neglected garden together with the North London September sun quite warm on them, and McCreedy says to the daughter he tries so hard to love, "What'll we do on my birthday, then, Katy?"

She's playing with her tarty little dolls that have tits and miniature underwear. She holds them by their shapely legs and their golden tresses wave around like flags. "Dunno," she says. "What?"

He sits on a plastic garden chair and she lays her nymphos side by side in a pram. "Cindy and Barbie are getting stung," she whines.

"Who's stinging them, darling?"

"Nettles, of course. Cut 'em down, can't you?"

"Oh no," he says, looking at where they grow so fiercely, crowding out the roses Hilda planted years ago. "Saving them, sweetheart."

"Why?"

"For soup. Nettle soup—to make you beautiful."

She looks at him gravely. For nine years, she's believed everything he's said. Now she's on the precipice of disbelief, almost ready to fly off the edge.

"Will it?" she says.

"Sure it will. You wait and see."

LATER in the day, when his son Michael comes in, McCreedy stops him before he goes up to his room. He's thirteen. On his white neck is a red mark that looks like a love bite.

"What you staring at?" says Michael.

"Nothing," says McCreedy.

"What, then?"

"Your mother was wondering what we might all do on me birthday. If you had any thoughts about it . . . ?"

Michael shrugs. It's like he knows he's untouchable, invincible: He's the future. He doesn't have to give the present any attention. "No," he says. "Not specially. How old are you anyway?"

"Forty-five. Or it might be a year more."

"Which?"

"I don't remember."

"Fuck off, Dad. Everyone remembers their fuckin' age."

"Well, I don't. Not since I left Ireland. I used to always know it then, but that's long ago."

"Ask Mum, then. She'll know."

And Michael goes on up the stairs, scuffing the carpet with the bulbous smelly shoes he wears. No thoughts. No ideas. Not specially.

And again McCreedy is alone.

BUT they have to do something. Like Christmas, a birthday is there: an obstacle in the road you can't quite squeeze round.

So McCreedy goes to see his friend Spiros, who runs a little restaurant two streets away, and tells him they'll come early Saturday evening, about seven so Katy won't be too tired, and can Spiros do steaks or cutlets because Hilda won't eat any Greek stews or fish.

"No problem," says Spiros. "And we make you a cake, John?"

"No," says McCreedy, "no bloody cake. Just do some nice meat."

Spiros takes down a bottle and pours two thimbles of brandy for him and McCreedy. It's five in the afternoon, and they're alone in the place, sitting on stools under the fishing nets that drape the ceiling.

"Commiserations," says Spiros.

"Ta," says McCreedy.

They drink and Spiros pours them another. He's a good man, thinks McCreedy. Far from home, like me, but making a go of it. Not complaining. And he does lovely chips.

HE tells Hilda it's all booked and arranged, she can take it off her mind, and she looks pleased for once. "All right," she says. "Good. But don't go and spoil it by going out first and getting sloshed, will yer?"

"Why would I?" says McCreedy.

And he wouldn't, he thinks, honest to God, if only the presents had been better. But Hilda has no imagination. Where her imagination should be there's an old tea stain.

Socks, they give him. A Mr. Grumpy T-shirt. Tobacco. Katy draws a house in felt-tip, folds it in half, like a card, forgets to write anything in it.

He has to tell someone how pathetic this seems to him, how the T-shirt is grounds for divorce, isn't it?

"Absolutely," say his mates in the pub. "Fuckin' socks as well," they say. "Socks is grounds."

They've done the pub up. It feels almost like you're drinking somewhere classy, except it's the same landlord with his face like a dough ball, and the same drinkers, mostly Irish, he's known for fifteen years. And they all, after the first couple of drinks, start to feel comfortable and full of friendliness, and the world outside goes still and quiet. And McCreedy loves this feeling of the quiet outside and the laughter within. It reminds him of something he once had and knows he's lost. It's the best.

He wants to prolong it. Just let everything unwind nice and slowly here. But he tells his mates, "Kick me out at seven. Make sure I'm gone."

And they promise. In between pints, they say, "Plenty of time yet, John, hours of time." And the pub fills up and starts to get its Saturday-night roar. And a spike-haired girl he's seen before comes up to him for a light and stays by him and he buys her a lager. She smells of leather and her skin's creamy white and she tells him she went to Ireland once and got bitten by a horse. And she shows him the scar of the bite on her shoulder and he touches it and thinks, She's what I'd really like for my birthday.

HE'S only twenty minutes late at the restaurant. You'd think it was two hours from the look on Hilda's face, and when he says he's sorry she turns her head away, like she can't bear the sight nor smell nor sound of him.

"Well," he says, "did you order?"

"Nettle soup," says Katy, who's wearing a funny little velvet hat. "I want nettle soup."

"Fuck off, Katy," says Michael.

"That's enough, Michael," Hilda snaps.

She's ordered a gin. She's billowing her smoke out into the room. The menus sit in a pile, pushed aside, like she thinks she isn't going to understand a single thing in them.

McCreedy takes one and opens it. "Dolmades." "Keftedes." "Horiatiki." Excuse me, Spiros. Even the lettering's weird.

"Hey!" he calls, tilting his chair backward and feeling himself almost fall. "Spiros!"

But Spiros is in the kitchen, as he should have remembered, and it's Elena, Spiros's wife with her mournful face, who comes over with an order pad and McCreedy tells her listen, none of this fancy-sounding stuff, just meat, steak or chops, with chips, O.K., and a pint of Guinness and Coke or something for the kids.

"Lilt," says Michael.

"Lilt, then, for him," says McCreedy.

"Which you want?" says Elena.

"One Lilt, one Coke for Katy."

"Which you want, steak or pork chops, pork kebab?"

"Not pork, do you, Hilda?"

"Steak for me."

"Steak for her. And me. You want steak, Michael?"

"Yeh."

"Katy?"

"You said nettle soup would—"

"Not now. Pork or steak?"

She hides under the sad little hat. It's like she's got no neck at all. And now she's going to start crying.

"It's O.K.," says McCreedy, "she'll have steak. Small portion."

"How you want them—rare, medium, well-done?"

"Well-done," says Hilda and passes Elena the rest of the menus, like she wants them out of her sight. Then she hands Katy a red paper napkin and she holds it round her mouth like a gag and her tears are just enough to moisten its edge. She glares at McCreedy over the top of it.

MCCREEDY can't eat the food. It's a good steak. Large and juicy. But he can't get it down.

It's partly the drink he's had, but it's something else as well. It's what his life looks like across this table. Hatred. Indifference. Love. All three staring him in the eye, waiting for him to respond, to act, to assert himself, to be. And he can't. Not anymore. For a long time he could and did. He fought them and held them close. He wept and screamed and tried to think of all the appropriate words of apology and affection. Right up to yesterday. But that's it, over now. They can't see it yet, but he knows it's happened: they've used him up. McCreedy's used up.

He sits in silence while they eat and talk. Katy stares at him under her hat, stuffing chips, one by one. Hilda and Michael blather about Arsenal. Michael snatches Katy's steak and gobbles it down. Hilda sucks the lemon from her gin glass. All McCreedy is doing is waiting for them to finish.

And when they have he begins gathering up the plates. Dinner plates, knives and forks, side plates, veg dishes. One by one, he reaches across the table and piles them into a stack in front of him. It's a neat stack, like Hilda makes at home, with his own uneaten piece of meat transferred to the top plate, and then he sits back and stares at it.

"McCreedy," says Hilda. "This is a restaurant."

"I know it's a restaurant," he says. Michael is falling around, giggling, scarlet. "Dad," he splutters, "what the fuck you doing?"

"What does it look like?"

"Pass them round again, McCreedy," snarls Hilda. "You'll make us the laughing stock."

"No," he says.

"Katy," says Hilda, "give out the plates again."

"There's nothing on them," he says, "except on mine. Why d'you want them?"

"Jesus Christ!" says Hilda. "Give us back the plates before that woman comes."

"No," he says again. Then he picks up his flab of steak in his fingers and lets it dangle above the stack. He takes a breath.

"See this?" he says. "This is John McCreedy, aged forty-six today. See it? Chewed and left. Stranded. And this is all your stuff, underneath. Cold and hard and messed up. And I'm telling anyone who wants to listen that I want to get down from here, but I don't for the life of me know how."

They all three stare at him. They don't know what on earth to make of it all, except it frightens them, it's so dramatic and Irish and odd. Hilda opens her mouth to say it must be the Guinness talking, but no words come out. She begins scrabbling in her bag for a new pack of cigarettes. Michael swears under his breath and gets up and slouches off to the toilet. Katy puts her thumb in her mouth. She watches her father drop the meat and she knows what's going to happen next: McCreedy is going to sweep the stack onto the floor, where it will break into a thousand pieces.

But then Spiros is there at the table. He's smiling. He smells of his charcoal fire, and his face is pink and gleaming. And he laughs good-naturedly at the stack and slaps McCreedy's thin shoulder blades, then snaps his fingers for a waitress to take the pile of plates and dishes away.

He waits a fraction of a second until it's safely gone, and then he says, "O.K. Serious business now. Some champagne on the house for my old friend John McCreedy and his family, and a beautiful dessert for the princess in the hat." ♦

BOOKS

IT WAS SAD

Our endless impulse to raise the Titanic.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

THE R.M.S. (Royal Mail Steamer) Titanic, whose sinking, more than eighty-four years ago, made the biggest news splash of the new century, still generates headlines. The discovery of the wreck, in 1985, three hundred and seventy miles southeast of Newfoundland and two and a half miles below the surface of the Atlantic, by a team of scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer, revivified a fascination that had never quite died. Though the leader of the expedition, Robert Ballard, denounced salvage of the wreck, and placed a plaque on the Titanic's stern declaring it "a sacred resting place," his French partners in *l'exploitation de la mer* did not share his qualms. More submersible vessels rather than fewer will likely visit the watery grave and bring sacred relics to the surface. Lumps of coal from the Titanic's bins can be bought for twenty-five dollars each, and nine bottles of Bass Ale (of twelve thousand on board) have been recovered, along with plates, chamber pots, toilet articles, a camera, a gilded chandelier, and a wallet stuffed with money and receipts. The debris is scattered over a square mile; the ship lies in two big pieces, the stern badly damaged but the bow still grand. Touted as "unsinkable," the Titanic at its launching became the largest movable object ever made by man—eight hundred and eighty-two feet (nearly three football fields) in length, forty-six thousand tons in weight. Her rudder weighed a hundred and one tons, and her hull contained three million rivets. This August, an eleven-ton, twenty-by-twenty-four-foot section of the hull slipped away from the diesel-fuel-filled lifting balloons, giving rise to another headline. A more modest retrieval, a small piece of inch-thick hull steel holding three rivet holes, led to a scientific test in Canada demonstrating that the Titanic steel was sulfur-rich and brittle; modern steel might simply have bent upon contact with the iceberg. So our sense of the Titanic undergoes yet another modification: it was made of bad steel.

Steven Biel, in his cumbersomely titled "Down with the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the Titanic Disaster" (Norton; $25), traces the various meanings that the Titanic's sinking has had for Americans since it so astoundingly occurred, in mid-April of 1912. In Biel's account, the first reports, based upon the Titanic's last wireless message—"Sinking by the head. Have cleared boats and filled them with women and children"—created a legend of heroic first-class-cabin males gallantly giving up their lifeboat seats to the weak and fair and socially inferior. The proprietorial rule of white Anglo-Saxon males was being challenged by suffragists and labor organizers, and the conservative press seized the opportunity to extol "that Christian knightliness which seeks not its own, but the good of others." Archibald Gracie, a first-cabin survivor (Titanic survival was morally suspect, but Gracie went down with the ship and swam with "unusual strength" to a capsized lifeboat), wrote that the "coolness, courage, and sense of duty that I . . . witnessed made me thankful to God and proud of my Anglo-Saxon race that gave this perfect and superb exhibition of self-control at this hour of severest trial." The Atlanta *Constitution* proclaimed:

> The Anglo-Saxon may yet boast that his sons are fit to rule the earth so long as men choose death with the courage they must have displayed when the great liner crashed into the mountains of ice, and the aftermath brought its final test.

"Must have displayed"—tales, some based on the testimony of first-class female survivors and others spun out of sheer wishful thinking, dramatized the heroic last minutes of upper-class representatives such as John Jacob Astor, George D. and Harry Widener, J. B. Thayer, President Taft's military aide Archibald Butt, and two Jewish millionaires, of whom Biel says, "Wealth apparently transformed Isidor Straus and Benjamin Guggenheim into honorary Anglo-Saxons." Guggenheim debonairly donned a tuxedo at the last; Straus refused to let his advanced age win him a place in a lifeboat; and the celebrated decision of Mrs. Straus to stay on the sinking ship with her husband was fodder for articles, sermons, and a poem urging all women to "Emulate the deed of such a wife, / As went down in the blue." If the Strauses displayed the right stuff on the first-class deck, however, the alien races in steerage became in their panic "a frenzied mob of armed brutes," held back by the officers' guns. Fifth Officer Harold Lowe recalled, "I saw a lot of Latin people all along the ship's rails. They were glaring more or less like wild beasts, ready to spring." The cowardly men who allegedly showed up in the lifeboats, sometimes clad in women's clothes, were variously reported as Italian, Japanese, Armenian, and Filipino. The thronging brutes on the sinking Titanic uncannily resembled "the specters of an immigrant tidal wave engulfing the United States in the early twentieth century." The statistics show a different class bias:

> Of the first-cabin men, 31 percent survived, compared with 10 percent in second class and 14 percent in steerage. In all, 60 percent of the first-cabin passengers lived, compared with 44 percent of the second-cabin passengers and only 25 percent of the steerage passengers.

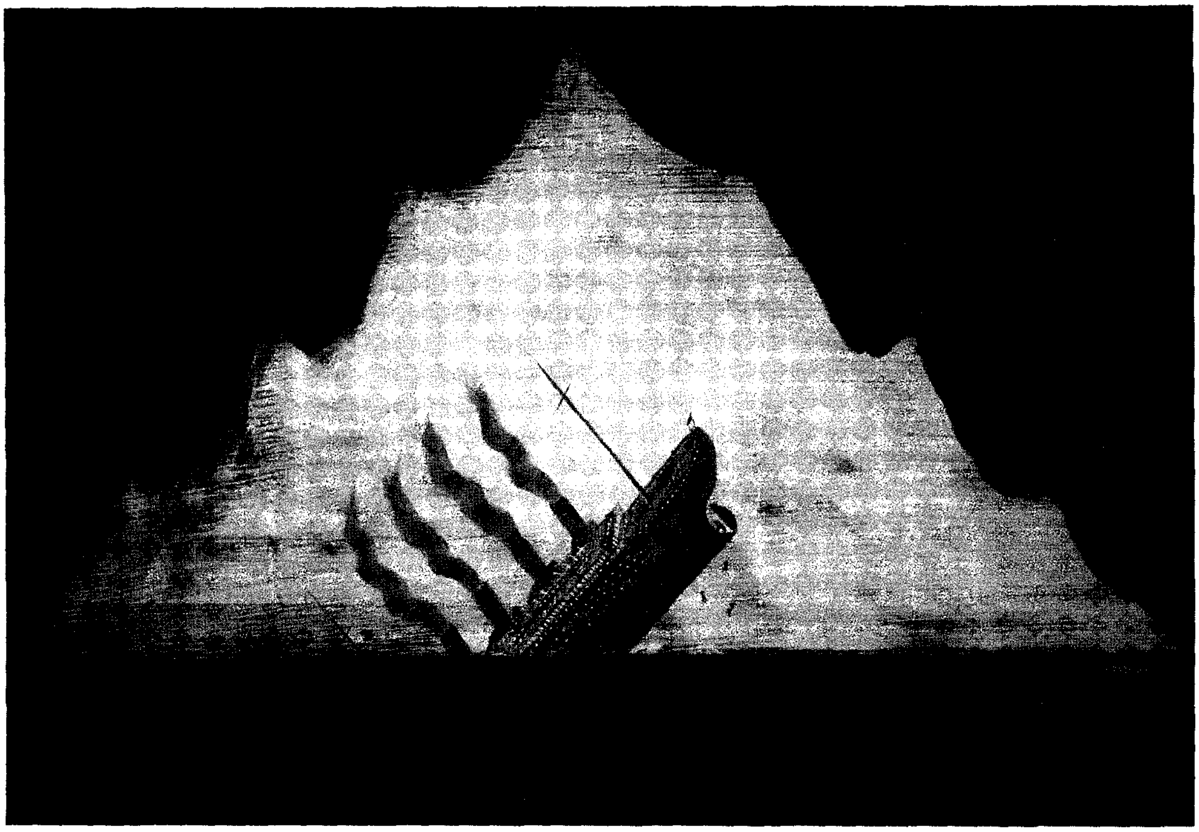
Walter Lord's "A Night to Remember" (1955) points out that "somehow the loss rate was higher for Third Class children than First Class men."

The Titanic had other repercussions than glorification of the ruling class. Ministers took the occasion to denounce Mammon and his works. The Reverend Charles H. Parkhurst, of Manhattan's Madison Square Presbyterian Church, preached the cautionary paradox of "dead helplessness wrapped in priceless luxury":

> Everything for existence, nothing for life. Grand men, charming women, beautiful babies, all becoming horrible in the midst of the glittering splendor of a $10,000,000 casket!

George Chalmers Richmond, a Philadelphia Episcopalian, even maligned

John Jacob Astor, a recent divorcé embarked with his nineteen-year-old second wife: "Mr. Astor and his New York and Newport associates have for years paid not the slightest attention to the laws of church or state which have seemed to contravene their personal pleasures or sensual delights. But you can't defy God all the time." For this breach of respect the Reverend Mr. Richmond was roundly condemned.



We are left with an impulse to touch the disaster, to grapple unironically with its powerful facts.

Among the alarming apparitions of the Titanic's last minutes had been a "grimy stoker of gigantic proportions" who tried to steal the wireless operator's life jacket. The grimy cad became, in Logan Marshall's 1912 book on the disaster, a "negro stoker creeping up behind the operator." But in fact no Negro of either sex was privileged to be aboard. A Leadbelly song at the time went, "Black man oughta shout for joy, / Never lost a girl or either a boy." Black America and its press were relatively indifferent to the Titanic's loss; yet a cycle of vernacular poems, or "toasts," arose which featured a black stoker called Shine, whose behavior was the pointed opposite of that of the first-cabin self-sacrificers. Told by the captain to go back down below, Shine responds, "There's one time you white folks ain't gonna shit on Shine," and "I'm gonna try to save this black ass of mine." He successfully swims to safety, while doomed white men offer him money and the sexual favors of their wives: "One thing about you white folks I couldn't understand: / You all wouldn't offer me that pussy when we was all on land." Another scornful countercurrent existed in the radical left-wing press: *Masses* decried the "insanity of luxury, of foolish display and self-pampering even to the point of wrecking the safety and health of the luxurious themselves," and a writer who signed himself John M. Work asserted, in the magazine *NYC*, that the wreck was "a very slight tragedy" compared with the "millions upon millions who are enduring a living death under capitalism."

In song and anecdote, the Titanic was remembered through the greater disasters of economic depression and two world wars. One of the wealthy survivors, Eleanor Widener, gave two million dollars for a new main library at Harvard named for her son, Harry Elkins Widener, a twenty-seven-year-old bibliophile. (Biel, who uses the library, thinks that the sumptuous memorial chambers caused scrimping in the stacks and elevators.) In Washington, the long-planned Women's Titanic Memorial to the men who sacrificed themselves was not dedicated until 1931, and eventually, to make way for the Kennedy Center, was moved from that site to a less prominent one, at Fourth and P Streets. In 1955, the ship's legend was given fresh life by Lord's best-selling "A Night to Remember." According to Biel, Lord bestowed upon the Titanic disaster its significance as the end of an Edwardian era of noblesse oblige and general confidence in a civilization headed by the glamorous rich. Lord wrote, "The unending sequence of disillusionment that has followed can't be blamed on the Titanic, but she was the first jar. Before the Titanic, all was quiet. Afterward, all was tumult." But the feeling behind such a gross simplification had existed, surely, from the beginning. Lord's book had been preceded by the 1953 Hollywood movie "Titanic," with Clifton Webb and Barbara Stanwyck as an estranged couple who reconcile as the ship founders, and it was followed by a television program narrated by Claude Rains, and a British film with the same title as the book, starring Kenneth More as Second Officer Charles Lightoller, who, while bobbing disconsolately on a capsized lifeboat, pronounces, "I don't think I'll ever feel sure again. About anything." A more cheerful commercial spinoff of the disaster was the 1960 Broadway musical "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," about the Titanic survivor Margaret Tobin Brown, a plucky mining plutocrat from Denver who was played by Tammy Grimes onstage and Debbie Reynolds in the 1964 movie—"the last," Biel tells us, "of the grandiose MGM screen musicals."

The legend's Cold War use as an indicator of America's unsinkability seems to me one of Biel's more far-fetched readings (what Hollywood musical heroine *isn't* plucky and unsinkable?), but there is no denying the religious devotion that Titanic buffs bring to every detail of their ship and its memorable last night. Centered on the Titanic Historical Society, which operates out of Henry's Jewelry Store, in Indian Orchard, Massachusetts, the cult devours arcana. "I can't learn enough about her," one member avowed. For another member, the Titanic "expresses in that era the eternal achievement of humankind" and for yet another "represents a way of life which I and others long for." Such enthusiasm led, in the macho Reagan era, from adoration of the unattainable beloved to physical possession of her underwater body. The successful diver, Robert Ballard—publicized as an old-style "cowboy" entrepreneur—is called by Biel a symbol of "revitalized American masculinity and a resurgent nation," and is caught using the vocabulary of sexual adventure. The sunk Titanic, viewed in 1985 through an unmanned submersible containing underwater cameras, appeared to be "gorgeous" and "in beautiful condition." A year later, Ballard, after "penetrating" her with a joystick-operated video camera, confided in the *National Geographic*, "Though still impressive in her dimensions, she is no longer the graceful lady that sank a mere five days into her maiden voyage." And to an interviewer Ballard revealed that disillusion had become downright marital: "It seemed nice at the time—you know, she was cute, she was nice and all that sort of thing—but now I'm married to her and wondering if I made a mistake."

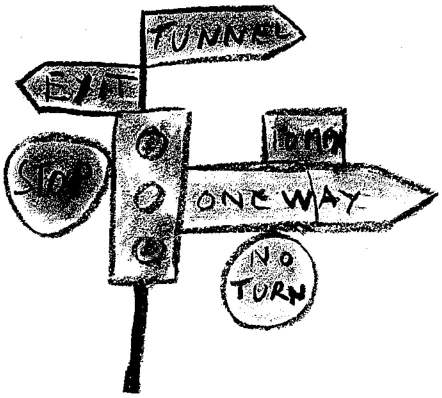
This is a funny and wickedly apt deconstruction, but Biel's book as a whole has the frustrating feeling of floating above coral gardens in a glass-bottomed boat. The thing itself, the event in its complex actuality, remains out of reach; in the cultural historian's world of "established meanings," there are no facts, just construals, mind-sets recovered from the dust of libraries and tied to stereotyped decades. To anyone alive in the nineteen-fifties, a passage like this has a tinny ring:

> While many fifties Americans were reading about or watching the *Titanic* disaster, the atomic establishment was telling the public about "the sunny side of the atom." More broadly, the nostalgia for security reflected an ambivalence about the achievements of the "affluent society" and the burgeoning national security state. Locating security in the remote, pre-*Titanic* past called into question the claims that defense-based abundance had provided Americans with permanent safety and comfort.

There is nothing blatantly false here, but also nothing out of conformity with the standard historical take on the fifties: affluence, the atom, and national security monopolized people's heads back then. History becomes a stream of group obsessions and delusions that the writer and his reader have of course transcended. We read:

> In the case of the *Titanic* the myth of first-cabin male heroism appealed to conventional understandings and sentimental notions of gender roles that involved a series of oppositions: strength versus weakness; independence versus dependence; intellect versus emotion; public versus private.

Such oppositions have nothing, presumably, to do with us or the enduring human condition. We get the impression that nothing ever happens—there are just widespread opinions that something has happened. This style of history is like the present style of reading literature in academia: plenty of reference to implied social constructs but little to enduring truthfulness or a passionate excellence. With a fussy wealth of "*sic*"*s* and brackets, Biel puts the past in quotation marks, like a quaint or archaic expression. We float above the coral wonders of a sunken garden in which the giant Titanic serves but as an artificial shoal, its body ornately grown over by successive "myths."



WE are left with an impulse to *touch* the disaster, to grapple unironically with its powerful facts. Lord's book is the best known of many; Wyn Craig Wade's "The Titanic: End of a Dream" (1979) is a more thorough, argumentative work, concentrating not on the drama of multitudinous subjective viewpoints like "A Night to Remember" but on the verbatim testimony by witnesses, principally those who appeared before the United States Senate hearing later that April, chaired by Senator William Alden Smith, of Michigan—no relation to Edward J. Smith, the unfortunate captain of the Titanic. The captain and most of his senior officers did not survive to be interrogated, so the justifications of their mistakes could never be heard; but the survivors, crew and passengers, had much to say of the confusion attending the wreck and its dismal immediate aftermath on the water. Senator Smith, against some protest in the British press, persisted in eliciting the extraordinary fact that the half-filled lifeboats collectively refused to go back toward the site of the sinking, which had left hundreds of people floating and thrashing in the freezing water, crying out for help. The Senate hearing held this exchange between Smith and Third Officer Herbert J. Pitman, who had been in one of the lifeboats:

> "Did you hear any cries of distress?"
>
> "Oh, yes."
>
> "What were they—cries for help?"
>
> "Crying, shouting, moaning."
>
> "From the ship or from the water?"
>
> "From the water after the ship disappeared—no noises before."
>
> "Did you attempt to get near them?"
>
> "As soon as she disappeared, I said, 'Now, men, we will pull toward the wreck.' Everyone in my boat said it was a mad idea, because we had far better save what few we had in my boat than go back to the scene of the wreck and be swamped by the crowds that were there." . . .
>
> "I'll ask you if any woman in your boat appealed to you to return to the direction from which the cries came."
>
> "No one."

In boat after boat, the women were in no mood to return the life-and-death courtesies extended them by the men, nor did any of the crew members in charge—with the energetic exception of Fifth Officer Lowe—insist on a rescue mission. From a mile away, one witness heard "a heavy moan as of one being from whom final agony forces a single sound"; to another, Jack Thayer, who himself had been in the water, the sound was "like locusts on a midsummer night"; to a third it resembled the noise a baseball crowd makes when a home run is hit. Pitman admitted to hearing "a continual moan for about an hour" and, in tears, told Smith, "I cannot bear to recall it." This terrible lack of heroism, this dazed failure of mercy, does not figure in Mr. Biel's cultural history; it generated no provocative myths.

The cries are heard, though, by the twenty-two-year-old hero of Beryl Bainbridge's new novel, "Every Man for Himself" (Carroll & Graf; $21), when he surfaces out of the undertow of the plunging ship:

> I had thought I was entering paradise, for I was alive and about to breathe again, and then I heard the cries of souls in torment and believed myself in hell. Dear God! Those voices! *Father . . . Father . . . For the love of Christ . . . Help me, for pity's sake! . . . Where is my son.* Some called for their mothers, some on the Lord, some to die quickly, a few to be saved. The lamentations rang through the frosty air and touched the stars; my own mouth opened in a silent howl of grief. The cries went on and on, trembling, lingering—and God forgive me, but I wanted them to end.

Bainbridge is attracted to disasters and male perspectives; her previous novel, "The Birthday Boys," brilliantly renders the Scott expedition to the South Pole, another casualty of 1912, in the voices of the five participants who perished. She boils British heroism down to a boyish camaraderie that makes light of hideous hardships. In "Every Man for Himself" Bainbridge writes with a kind of betranced confidence, seeming to lose all track of her story only to pop awake for a stunning image or an intense exchange; as postmodern a fictionist as Biel is a historian, she only intermittently gives us the *ding an sich.* Her sudden details make a surreal effect. The hero, Morgan (called nothing else, as if in blunt token of his condition as an adopted son of his uncle J. P. Morgan, the owner of the Titanic's White Star Line), remembers from his childhood a housemaid interrupting her scrubbing to comfort him: "A bubble of soap burst in her hair as she took me on her knee." When a friend on the Titanic displays a fragment of the iceberg that has brushed the ship, "he thrust it under my nose and it smelt rank, a bit like a sliver of rotten mackerel." And when the famous band on the doomed vessel goes on deck to play, Morgan, heading down into the lounge, notes, "I could see the score in the carpet where the cellist had dragged up his instrument." These precisionist visions loom out of a fog of obscure motivation and vague portentousness: "In Scurra's company it was necessary to contemplate the exquisite darkness of the world"; "Pity welled up in me, and envy too, for I might never know the sort of love that gripped her by the throat."

Hard-drinking Morgan, returning from England to New York in a crowd of chummy nobs, is in love with the "absolutely unobtainable" Wallis Ellery. "Dancing with her was like holding cut glass; Hopper [a chum] got it about right when he complained she made him feel he left finger marks." Relations between the young in 1912 were sexually constrained:

> Most of our time was spent thinking what we might do with women if only we had the chance. There were houses we could go to, of course, but with girls of our own set there was never the slightest opportunity of trying out even a little of what we'd learnt.

Morgan gets a distinct shock, then, when at close quarters he overhears Wallis making kinky love (she likes being tied) with their sinister fellow-passenger Scurra, whose grotesquely split lip is never satisfactorily explained. Scurra is ready to share, however, any number of aperçus. "One must distinguish," he says, in refutation of Morgan's idealistic Marxism, "between use-value and exchange-value. . . . Philosophically speaking, life may be said to have use-value, but only for the individual. Its exchange is death, which has no value whatsoever unless one is in severe torment." Asked by his slowly illumined acolyte if he is in love with Wallis, Scurra replies, "Love? Good heavens! Love is what women feel."

Wallis is so enamored of Scurra that she has to be dragooned into a lifeboat. In historical actuality, many of the women did at first resist exchanging the vast deck of the luxurious Titanic for a lifeboat swaying in its davits above the black midnight ocean. Captain Smith gave few clear orders; no safety drills had been rehearsed. The confusion of the ship's last two and a half hours could have been worse; crew members, knowing in the pit of their stomachs that these were most likely the

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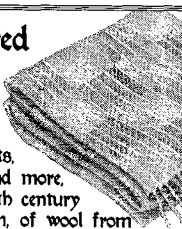
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last hours of their lives, by and large performed dutifully, and the second- and third-class passengers tended to observe the proprieties, sticking to their sections even as the decks perilously tilted. The band played on. The class system held, though it failed of its basic promise to its lesser orders: Know your place, and you will be taken care of.

In the progress of Morgan's coming of age via glimpses of sex and death, fictional and real characters mingle: he brushes against Mrs. Straus on the ship's Grand Stairway, and observes the Astors looking "as if they'd barely finished a thundering row . . . he nearing fifty, his long gloomy nose nudging his moustaches, she barely nineteen, her flower head drooping on the stalk of her neck." He happens to overhear that there are no binoculars in the crow's nest—a detail dear to Titanic scholars. Morgan's knowledge of the ship is above average, since, in obedience to his uncle, he worked for eleven months as an apprentice draftsman to Thomas Andrews, the designer of the great ship and himself on board, attentive to such minute details as the number of screws in the rooms' coat hooks. Amid the novel's somewhat bizarre and ghostly swarm of characters, the phlegmatic Andrews stands out in deserving pity. He was, of the foundering's fifteen hundred victims, the quickest to understand the fatal damage, and the one who knew best the love and labor lost when this nautical masterpiece was carelessly condemned to the bottom of the sea.

The Titanic's ill-fated voyage attracts dramatizers; "Every Man for Himself" is by no means the only Titanic novel published this year. There is also "Maiden Voyage," by Cynthia Bass (Villard), and "Psalm at Journey's End," by the Norwegian Erik Fosnes Hansen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), which has been a considerable best-seller in Europe. Bainbridge's novel shares with Bass's a young male narrator who finds himself through the ordeal, and with Hansen's a sense that Western civilization was ripe for a comeuppance. The Titanic in its very name evoked a race of beings destroyed by God. Wyn Craig Wade's scrupulous examination of the facts ends with a word flight claiming that the Titanic's "maiden voyage expresses the blind justice of Greek Tragedy, and the allegorical warning of the medieval morality play . . . the Titans' struggle against Jove, the Babylonians' ziggurat to heaven. . . . In a word, she is Hubris." Certainly fate played a delicate game with the ship that night. When the first reports began to come in, they were received incredulously, in part because, as Wade says, "there was no case in current recollection of any sizable ship going down as a result of an iceberg."

Had not First Officer William Murdoch, at the helm, in attempting to avoid the iceberg, maneuvered the ship into a glancing long blow instead of a head-on collision, the forward bulkheads might have contained the damage, as had happened with the Arizona in 1879, the Concordia in 1899, the Kron-Prinz Wilhelm in 1907, and the Columbia just the year past—all survived head-on collisions with icebergs. Had the crow's-nest lookouts possessed binoculars, they might have seen the iceberg a crucial minute earlier. In 1907, Captain Smith told an interviewer that in his forty years at sea he had "never been in any accident of any sort worth speaking about"; had he experienced any, he might not have been so sanguinely proceeding at near top speed through an ice field that many other ships had warned him about. And had Stanley Lord, the scapegoated captain of the Californian, not been so determined to stay asleep belowdecks that night, while his officers on deck kept seeing the Titanic's flares, or had Cyril Evans, the twenty-year-old radio operator of the Californian, not turned off his wireless ten minutes before the Titanic struck the iceberg and began flooding the air with calls for help, the Californian might have come to the rescue and saved many of the lives lost. Even without the Californian, had there been more than half enough lifeboats, and had the ship not been strange to its crew, and had there been a lifeboat drill, the toll would have been less. The sinking of the Titanic seems, like the world war that commenced twenty-seven months later, tragically avoidable; it was a disaster that men coasted into, confident of their invulnerability and righteousness. Its awful majesty is not easily assimilated, however, into invented narratives. Reading novels that take place on board is like sitting through the warmup acts of a rock concert, waiting for the star—the crash—to appear. The Titanic's story can't be topped, though it is being extended and reversed by the ship's piecemeal raising. The story's august moral remains: Nothing human is unsinkable. ♦

SHOWCASE BY
BRIGITTE LACOMBE

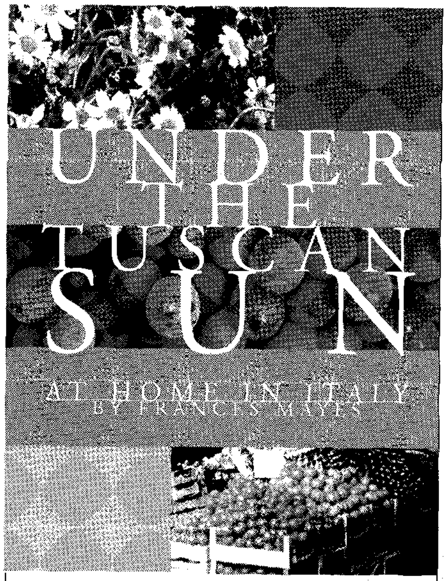
FOREIGN ACCENTS

"I WANTED to be a saint." Such was the ambition of Kristin Scott Thomas, a good Catholic girl, at the age of four. For some reason, she has yet to be canonized, although a series of performances has made her the object of widespread worship. She played Brenda Last, brittle with boredom, in "A Handful of Dust"; she was wound into the viscous web of "Bitter Moon" for Roman Polanski; and she went to the far reaches of Romania for "An Unforgettable Summer," where she learned her lines phonetically. All these roles involve wives in varying degrees of adventurous distress: excellent preparation for "The English Patient," which opens on November 15th. Scott Thomas stars as a well-bred blonde who betrays her husband in—or for—the sands of North Africa.

"People are always saying, English, English, English rose," Scott Thomas says, "and I just feel so completely different." To encounter her in Paris, where she lives with her French husband and their two children, is to realize that she is not simply bilingual; the figure who converses over a café crème—jeans and loafers, minimum makeup, boyish crop—is, to all intents and purposes, a Frenchwoman. If there is something unpredictable, a dash of impatience, in the angle at which she confronts the world, so much the better: a rose without thorns is a drag. Hence her infuriating habit of stealing a scene, or an entire movie, without appearing to make a grab for the goods. Audrey Hepburn had the same knack, which suggests an exact correlation between dramatic dominance and perfection of bone structure. "The English Patient" offers, among other things, an almost criminal array of good looks. There is Juliette Binoche, and, as Scott Thomas's lover, Ralph Fiennes—"*far* too beautiful," she says. "I'm never making a film with *him* again." If this principle were applied across the industry, of course, Kristin Scott Thomas would be out of work.

—ANTHONY LANE

Kristin Scott Thomas, photographed in Provence.



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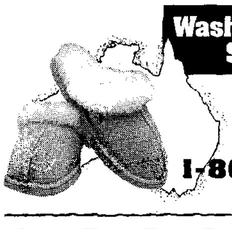

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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE LAWS OF OUR FATHERS, by Scott Turow (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $26.95). In Turow's fourth slow-motion legal thriller, the wife of a state senator has been killed in a drive-by shooting, and Judge Sonia Klonsky is presiding over the trial of the victim's son, who has been accused of masterminding the murder. Most of the protagonists have crossed paths decades before, when they were campus radicals, and there are some distinctly unconvincing flashbacks to the apocalyptic days of '69. Still, as the novel gathers momentum it reveals a complex portrait, in which children are forced to live in the shadow of their parents, and chastened middle-aged idealists must reckon with the enthusiasms and sins of their youth.

VOLCANO AND MIRACLE, by Gustaw Herling; selected and translated from the Polish by Ronald Strom (Viking; $24.95). The volcano is Vesuvius, and the miracle is the annual liquefaction of San Gennaro's blood—both natural concerns of the author, who lives in Naples. But his larger concern in these essays and narratives is the way we live suspended between terror and transcendence. Herling, who was born in Poland, spent two years in one of Stalin's labor camps, and he keenly assesses the place of intellectuals in the Soviet Union. He also writes beautifully of his adopted homeland—notably in a pair of narratives about Masaniello's uprising in Naples in 1647 and the plague that struck the city a decade later. Herling displays a rare blend of warmth without sentimentality, intelligence without vanity, and moral vision without complacency.

ROSA LEE: A MOTHER AND HER FAMILY IN URBAN AMERICA, by Leon Dash (Basic; $23). Rosa Lee Cunningham, who died of AIDS in 1994, at the age of fifty-nine, was an illiterate thief, prostitute, and drug addict. She was the mother of eight children (by assorted fathers), only two of whom escaped her pattern of crime and dependency on drugs and welfare, a pattern passed on to her grandchildren. Dash, a Washington *Post* reporter, spent four years chronicling Rosa Lee's life for a series that won the Pulitzer Prize and that, expanded for this powerful book, is an attempt to understand the underclass that has grown up in our ghettos. He brings the reader into Rosa's life as she saw and lived it.

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG, by David Cordingly (Random House; $25). Written by a former curator of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England, this succinct history is full of unexpected revelations about the facts and myths of piracy; a typical seventeenth-century Western pirate vessel, for example, was run democratically long before the French Revolution, and one of the most successful pirates of all time was a nineteenth-century Chinese woman who controlled some fifty thousand seagoing outlaws. Less surprising but equally welcome is the information that the "X" on a treasure map was the cartographic inspiration of Robert Louis Stevenson.

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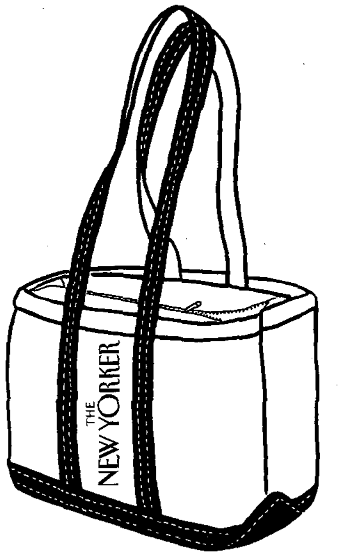

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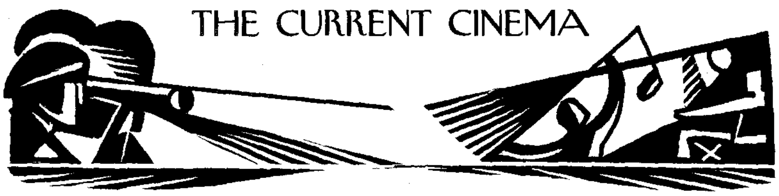


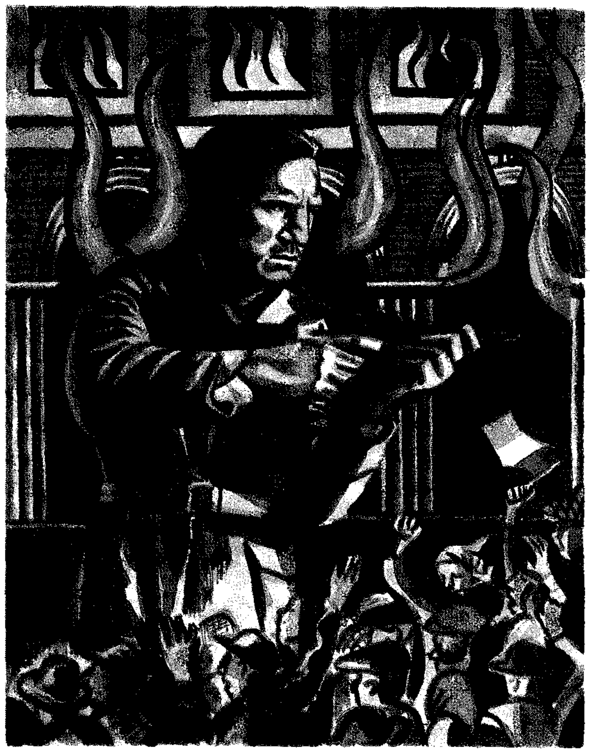
THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE THRILL OF A CAUSE

Neil Jordan's revolutionary Ireland is a refreshingly blarney-free zone.

BY ANTHONY LANE

"MICHAEL COLLINS" begins with a bang. Not immediately; first we have to sit through a Sinead O'Connor song, which appears to be the statutory penalty for watching any film about Ireland, regardless of period. In this instance, the period is 1916, and the bang is that of British artillery knocking large holes out of Dublin's General Post Office. Inside are the die-hards of the Easter Rising, among them Michael Collins (Liam Neeson), his best friend, Harry Boland (Aidan Quinn), and Eamon de Valera (Alan Rickman), the future President of a republic that in 1916 was no more than a heavily besieged dream. The scene marks a cunning move by the writer and director, Neil Jordan. For one thing, it demonstrates his willingness to drop us in medias res, thus heralding the busy pace of the whole movie; for another, the res itself is loaded with historical import, enough to make moviegoers wish they had paid attention during that Yeats class at school.



Liam Neeson as Michael Collins, who invented both urban guerrilla warfare and compromise with the British.

"Michael Collins" is not a biopic of Michael Collins—no early life, because it was not until 1916, when he fought and was imprisoned by the British, that he came alive, as it were, to his own political potential, and no later life, because he was killed by one of his own countrymen in 1922. If the movie feels packed to a fault, if it finds no room to pause for breath, then the fault may be a tribute to its hero, who crammed a quite impossible bulk of experience into six years. His was the classic sea change from freedom fighter to statesman: true to the curious logic of revolutionary movements, it was the fastidious, rather donnish de Valera who remained implacable in his desire for a republic and nothing else, while Collins the swaggering man of arms explored the difficult terrain of compromise. One moment, he was inventing the vicious art of urban guerrilla warfare, picking off British agents on the streets of Dublin; the next, he was seated at a table in London, at the ripe age of thirty, discussing the prospects for an independent Ireland with Lloyd George and Churchill. How did "the most wanted man in the Empire"—as Collins is labelled by one of his biographers, Tim Pat Coogan—find himself making peace at the heart of the imperial beast?

The fact that Neil Jordan's film doesn't

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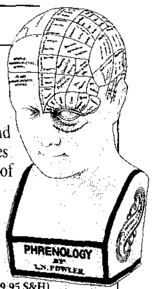

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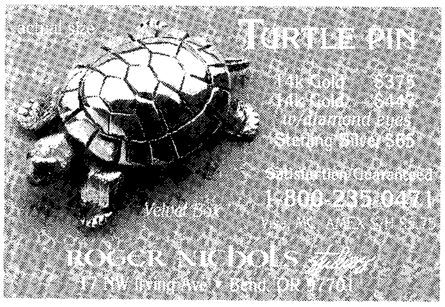

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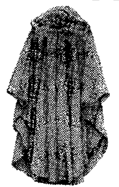

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altogether answer this question comes as no surprise, but neither is it a shame. There is a haste and sketchiness to the proceedings which is bound to infuriate historians of the era as well as partisans on every side; the sequence where an armored car fires on a football crowd, for example, is an unwise invention and a dumb thump of symbolism—those faceless Brits, eh? I'm not sure, however, that the political core of Collins's life would bear much dramatization. The most enthralling sections of Coogan's book deal with the negotiation of the Anglo-Irish treaty in 1921; but the movie shows us only buildup and aftershock, opting—perhaps wisely—to skip the talks themselves. "Michael Collins" is, for an Irish work of art, astonishingly untalkative, and a refreshingly blarney-free zone; it depends more on a rush of episodes whose common purpose is not so much to persuade as to excite. What Jordan has made, in fact, is a thriller. It is full of hideaways and close scrapes and ludicrous risks; there are chases through catacombs and on bicycles. Anyone who thinks of Collins as a prototype Nelson Mandela will be bemused by a series of exploits that smell strongly of Harry Lime—or of the I.R.A. man played by James Mason in another, equally haunted Carol Reed movie, "Odd Man Out."

If there is a proper sense of complication in "Michael Collins," it has less to do with shifting historical truths than with the skills of Chris Menges, Jordan's director of photography, who presents us with a welter of images that seem at once to assail and to seduce the eye. All the doubleness of feeling that should attend a subject as controversial as Collins is there in the rooms and landscapes that he inhabits. If you think that the politics of the time were treacherous, check out the climate: refusing the temptation of green wilderness or Celtic twilight, Menges rocks us with syncopated explosions, and happily switches from the sunset flaring along the flanks of a steam train to a Dublin downpour. He is even good on curtains—on the blissful glow that blooms when they are drawn by Kitty Kiernan (Julia Roberts) on a country morning, and on the dangerous red drapes in a hotel where, much later, she meets with Collins. Roberts looks more beautiful than ever, and not just because of the flattering fashions of the twenties; she has a slight role, as the graceful girl who befriended both Collins and Harry Boland and treated them like Jules and Jim, but Jordan finds a smiling relaxation in her that I thought had gone for good.

What he doesn't make plain is that Collins—for whom Kitty finally plumps—was not exactly the one-track wooer that we see onscreen. If not a full-throated womanizer, he was certainly more than a lilting charmer: during the Easter Rising, he took time out from the bombardment to keep a date, and his favorite place to unwind during the London talks was in the company (and most likely the arms) of a society hostess named Lady Lavery. The movie makes his devotion to Kitty solid, and even faintly dull, whereas a roving eye would somehow have completed, or at least enlivened, Jordan's portrait of his hero. Neeson has a fine swinging stride, and a taste for cooling banter in the heat of battle, but I wanted more mischief, and a lower boiling point for Collins's famously bad temper. These are crucial distinctions; I don't believe that "Michael Collins" is, as some have feared, republican propaganda, but I disliked the fact that there was never an instant, let alone a scene, in which I wasn't being encouraged to like Collins.

Early in the film, he describes himself as Minister for Gun-Running, Daylight Robbery, and General Mayhem, and that geniality remains buoyant throughout. His homicidal plans are invariably smoothed by euphemism: "Things might have to get rough," he says. But the roughness, whatever its provocation, was real and unsparing, and it does Collins no favors to hint that he was a reluctant warrior; it was war that led him toward peace. The killings that he ordered and organized come across as daring hit-and-run affairs, and one suspects that the killers did indeed see themselves as brave young bloods; the popular and perilous mythmaking that surrounded the Irish Volunteers and, subsequently, the I.R.A. was as nothing compared with their ability to mythologize themselves. For the most part, Jordan is immune from the romance of violence, taking care to characterize and pity its victims instead of filming them as disposable bodies. All the more disappointing, then, that he should choose to intercut the murders of British Secret Service officers with peaceful, playful shots of Collins and Kitty in their hotel, away from the slaughter. At one point, Collins even holds a rose. Yeah, sure.

Still, "Michael Collins" is a strong advance on Jordan's "The Crying Game," a film whose sexual implausibility was outstripped by its sweet-natured terrorist and its bizarre idea of a British soldier. What links Jordan's Irish movies, from "Angel" onward, with his other work, notably "The Company of Wolves" and "Interview with the Vampire," is the furtive suggestion that people are at the mercy of atmosphere—that magic and dread, whether erotic or political, encourage in us behavior for which we are not wholly responsible. (Is that why his casting is often a little weak or skewed?) Watching a Jordan film reminds me of reading Hardy: in the midst of submitting to its spell, you ask yourself what intrigues this director more—his characters or the frown of the gods above them? "Michael Collins" is his loudest and least dreamy picture, but even so it has a slightly underpowered feel; some of the performers hang back, as if the movie's flurry of activity, or the lowering cloud of momentous events, were too much for them. As a result, it's the quiet men on the sidelines—Stephen Rea as a hangdog detective, Ian Hart as Collins's loyal sidekick—who fare most impressively here, while someone like Aidan Quinn, in the more central role of Harry Boland, is left awkward and exposed. Nobody comes out and grabs the action—nobody, that is, until the final fifteen minutes or so, when Jonathan Rhys Myers turns up as the unnamed youth, hardly more than a boy, who puts a bullet through the head of Michael Collins. The assassin looks cocky, unfazed by others' fame, and so aroused by his task that he couldn't care less what his trigger finger will do for the breaking of nations. He shoots from a high hill, and we watch the kill from his point of view; the figure who crashes down is too far away to give off a cry, let alone the reek of tragedy. The story of Michael Collins quakes with the thrill of a cause, but in the face of the hothead who fells him we see the terrible promise of a thrill that will decay into addiction, and of all the blood yet to be shed. ♦

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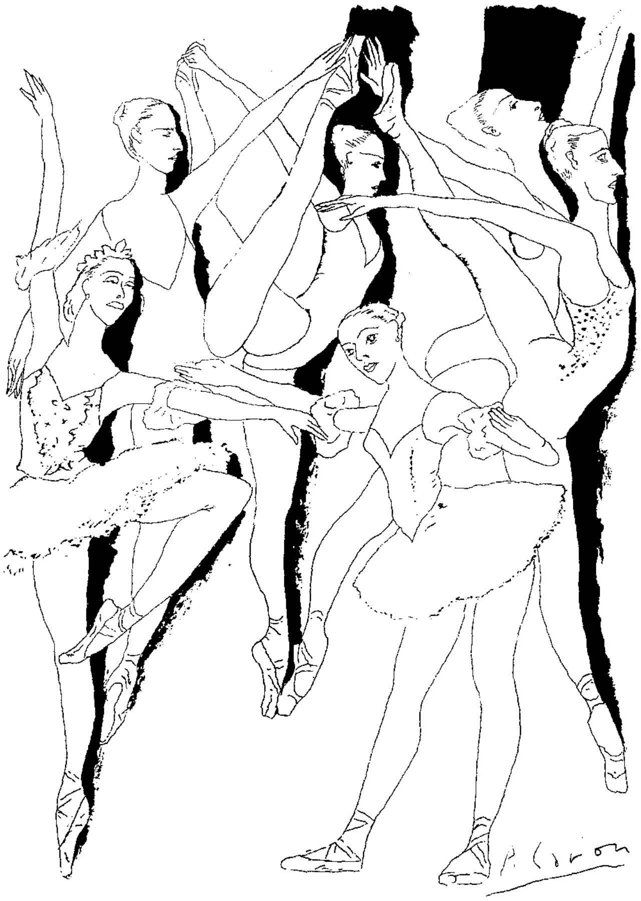
ONSTAGE

SEATTLE DANCES



PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET, the company from Seattle, opens a long-awaited New York engagement October 22nd, at City Center. When last seen here, in 1984, it was a nascent wonder: Balanchine had given it his ballets and his blessing, and on that base a company was being raised that deviated just enough from the Balanchine norm to be attractively independent. Obviously, the new directors, Kent Stowell and Francia Russell, knew what they were doing.

One of the ways they did not deviate was in their focus on female talent. In Russell's classes, the girls were drawn into the substance of technique; they danced the why as well as the what. Today, the company is able to put forward six ballerinas, all with markedly individual personalities and styles. The men aren't bad, either; there are outstanding soloists and partners among them.

There is also a repertory that ranges from the classical Petipa and Balanchine to the wilder, darker thickets of postmodernism. Stowell is a prolific choreographer, skillful in a variety of modes; New York will see two of his pieces, along with three by other choreographers—the American Mark Dendy, the Spanish Nacho Duato, and the Dutch Ton Simons.

One program, devoted to Russell's stagings of Balanchine, consists of the Mozart "Divertimento No. 15" (*five* ballerina roles), the Stravinsky "Agon," and the Ravel "La Valse." The "Agon," a close approximation of the original, 1957 production, in which Russell danced, differs from the current New York City Ballet version in both choreography (e.g., coda, first pas de trois) and style—P.N.B. is faster, more detailed, more winsome.

It is in these masterworks that the company's maturity is likely to be measured. But one hopes that the Stowell-Russell operation hasn't changed too much in twelve years—that it's still the mom-and-pop store that first brought us Balanchine live from Seattle. —ARLENE CROCE

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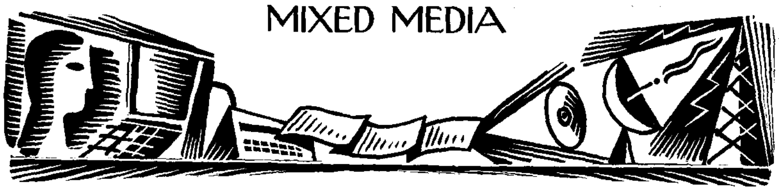
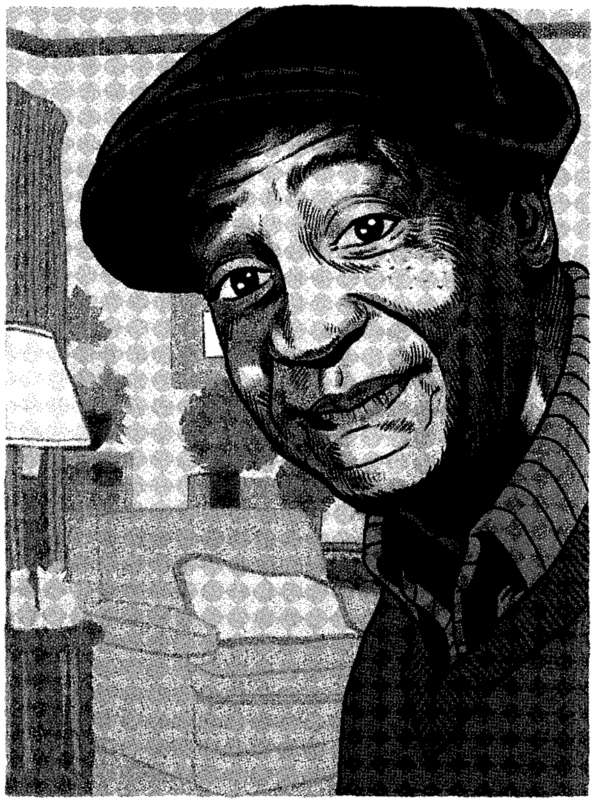


THE DAD TRAP

Is Cosby America's most repressed father?

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

Bill Cosby has landed another one on the green. In the eighties and early nineties, Cosby starred in "The Cosby Show," a sitcom that was not only a ratings monster (the No. 1 series for four consecutive seasons) but a model of civil discourse and traditional values at a time of gangsta rap and trash talk. As Dr. Cliff Huxtable, Cosby presided over an upwardly mobile black family that was intact, supportive, drug-free, college-educated, and cocooned in a colorful array of comfy sweaters—living proof that the American dream included African-Americans as long as they were willing to work hard, play fair, and not provoke Whitey. The Huxtables' house was a custom showroom of bourgeois contentment—a walk-in advertisement for the Reagan boom. With the Harvard professor Alvin Poussaint serving as a script adviser (his job was to root out negative stereotypes), the show was so proud and inspirational that it squeaked. After "The Cosby Show" ended its run, Cosby stumbled, first trying to coast on his ad-lib ability and people skills in a revival of Groucho Marx's old game show "You Bet Your Life," and then venturing into drama in "The Cosby Mysteries"—one of those poky whodunits, like "Matlock" and "Murder, She Wrote," which are intended to soothe the geriatric ward.



The new "Cosby," wholesome as ever, lives in a social vacuum that is pure TV.

His new series, called simply "Cosby," is based on the British sitcom "One Foot in the Grave," but any shadow of impending mortality is shooed away in the opening credits, which feature Cosby bopping against a city backdrop like a vagabond clown. Although the show is set in the borough of Queens (Archie Bunker country), it seems to take place in a Sesame Street neighborhood of quaint flopsy-mopsy characters. Audiences have responded to its cuddliness. In winning its eight-o'clock time slot, "Cosby" has given CBS an instant boost, firming up the network's big Monday-night comedy lineup, which also includes "Murphy Brown" and "Cybill." It is a personal triumph for Cosby, a comeback vehicle that proves he hasn't lost any of his comic timing or his rumpled aplomb. Yet the sitcom itself is oddly unsettled—patchy, yet pushy. It stresses its harmlessness to a nervous degree. It's nice to the point of intimidation.

Cosby plays Hilton Lucas, an airline employee who is a victim of downsizing after thirty years. When someone consoles him for losing his job, he says, "I didn't *lose* the job. They took it from me. I *know* where it is." Although Hilton is supposed to be a crusty man of sixty, he doesn't comport himself like the ranting and raving Redd Foxx of "Sanford and Son"; he putters around like a kid playing hooky. His confrontations with dry cleaners and car repairmen have a toothless, time-wasting quality that is both pleasant and pointless. His wife—played by Phylicia Rashad, his co-star from "The Cosby Show"—indulges his antics with a warm, beneficent smile in a slow bombardment of reaction shots. She's more a mother than a wife; he's less a husband than an adorable handful. As she sits and knits (Lord, how she sits and knits), he does cute shtick to grab her attention, and she plumps up, sly and amused. But there are only so many times this soufflé can rise, and by the second episode Rashad was already showing signs of fatigue at having to be so damned jolly. The show's wholesomeness would wear anyone down.

Cosby has long been a militant opponent of smutty humor. In the concert movie "Raw," Eddie Murphy does a riff about how Cosby tried to browbeat him into cleaning up his act. (As he reports, Richard Pryor told him to tell Cosby to "have a Coke and a smile, and shut the fuck up.") Over the years, Cosby has held firm to his conviction, resisting the rising Tarantino tide of "f" this and "f" that. He currently appears in a promotional spot for Turner Classic Movies in which he celebrates the old films for not having any cursing, and he has emphasized in interviews that "Cosby" will not use any four-letter words—not even mild ones, like "damn" or "hell." He has kept his promise—the show's dialogue is suitable for virgin ears. But it's as if cork-

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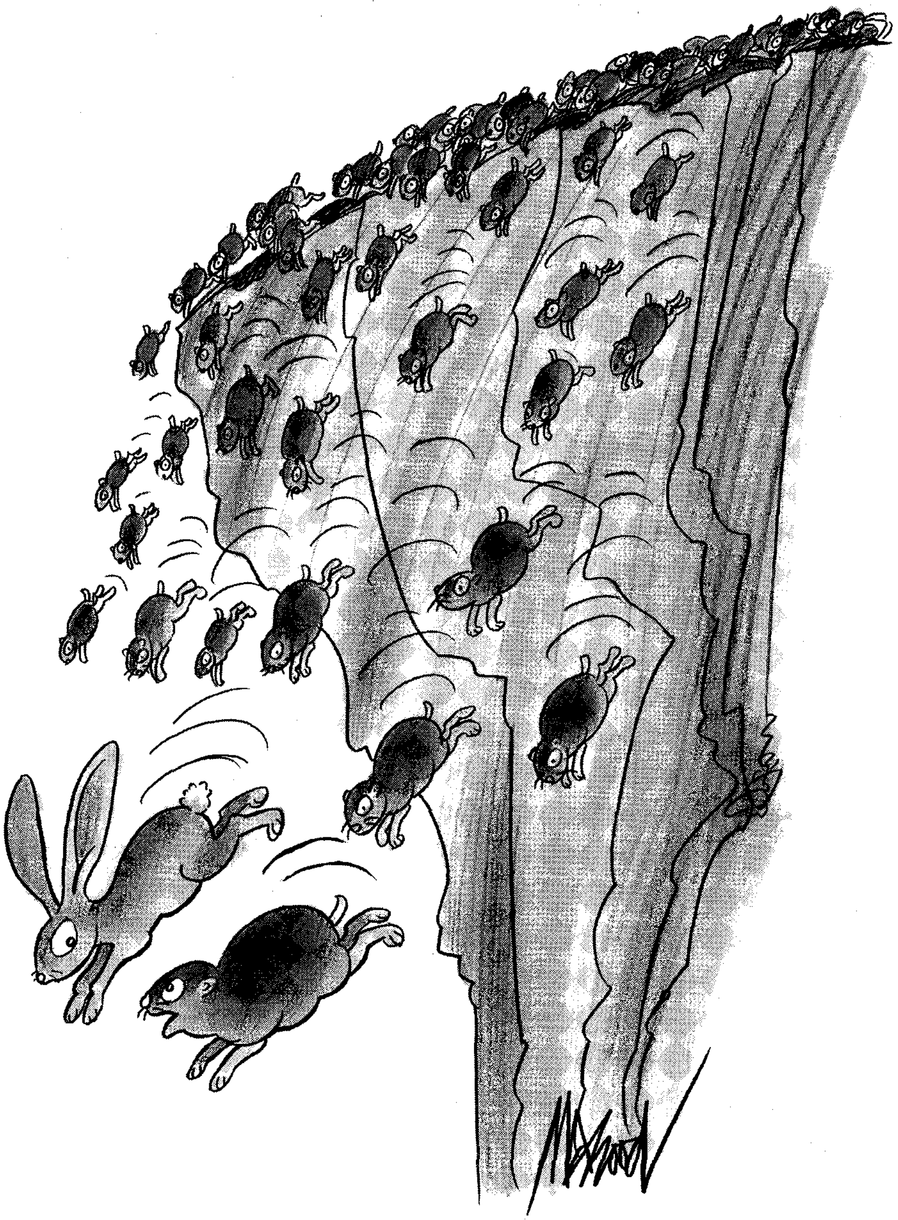
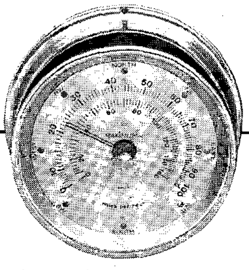
ing up one hole had only loosened others: the première episode included a sight gag about a urine sample being mistaken for hair dye; in the second, Cosby had Kool-Aid poured down his pants (twice) so that it looked as if he had soaked his lap. The slapstick on "Cosby" doesn't foreshadow the incontinence of old age but harks back to the diaper loads of infancy. Happiness is a warm nappy.

Whether he's attempting magic tricks, pouting about not getting a going-away party, or babysitting a pet turtle, Cosby dominates the show with his Play-Doh facial expressions, reducing the supporting cast to bystanders tossing the trained seal a fish. (As his wife's best chum, Madeline Kahn recites her lines as if they were being fed to her from the spirit world.) Cosby imposes himself not only through the physical presence and accrued prerogatives that come with stardom (it's a package he shares with Jerry Lewis, another powerhouse) but by holding down a psychological pressure that's never far from anger. Anyone who has watched Cosby closely over the years is aware of the temper lurking below the birthday-boy cheer he puts on for his Jell-O commercials. His run-on monologues on talk shows and at press conferences are a hair away from turning into tirades. The low simmer in Cosby's manner, the



"It's at times like this that you discover who your real friends are."



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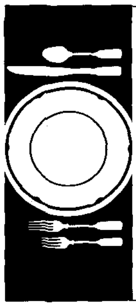

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tense outline of his body, even when he's reverting to childhood bliss, belong to a man who's used to having his way.

WHAT bends "Cosby" so strangely out of shape is how determinedly Cosby ducks the anger and frustration intrinsic to his character's plight. Cosby's career has been built on a creed of self-reliance—the belief that craft and determination will eventually be rewarded—and here is Hilton, let go from a lifetime career by a company that couldn't care less about the content of his character. This tearing of the social contract offers Cosby the opportunity to play against the grain of his own success story and put his bitter streak to good use. But it's an opportunity squandered. Perhaps Cosby is so beholden to the idea of success that he can't express the frustration born of a sense of failure (anyone who has been fired knows that you feel like a failure, even if it wasn't your fault), or perhaps he can't play against the grain because he's been such a dapper pro for so long that he's worn the grain smooth. Whatever the reason, Cosby seems disconnected on "Cosby," barricading himself inside his comfort zone and performing in a social vacuum that is pure TV. Hilton's family suffers no economic erosion as a result of his job loss. There isn't a shred of shabbiness in those bright interiors.

Job loss is emasculating for many men—a humiliating prospect that "Cosby" swerves into traffic to avoid. (At the end of one episode, Hilton, crowing like a rooster, climbed upstairs to have sex with his wife.) It's understandable that Cosby wouldn't feel easy playing a man who's been diminished. For he has an almost unique and burdensome role in popular culture—he's a father figure for a black America that has become increasingly fatherless. His longevity and his accomplishment have made him the honorary male head of the household (a reign he shares with Oprah, the honorary female head). Since Cosby's father was absent for much of his childhood, he may be filling a void in his own life as well as in the culture's: he has to be both the father his own father never was and a public paragon of kind strength and stability. He's doing double duty in the Dad department—no wonder he gets testy. It's often forgotten that what originally gave "The Cosby Show" its force was the papa-bear growl Cosby brought to the character of Cliff: I remember an early episode in which he warned his son, Theo, "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out." As the show became an institution, and more and more doll-like children were added to the cast, Cosby soft-pedalled his gruff authority and became one of the kids. Many of the later episodes seemed like children's parties. In this new show, he's playing to the small fry from the outset; the magic tricks he practices are intended to amuse a party of four-year-olds. With "Cosby," the child has become father to the child.

A SHOW can appeal to all age groups without getting so googly-eyed. Among the many black sitcoms on the air this fall is one called "The Steve Harvey Show" (WB, Sundays), in which Harvey plays a music teacher under duress in an ethnically mixed school. When the students give him static, he wistfully recalls how, when Sidney Poitier appeared in "To Sir with Love," all the white children joined hands and sang a song. There are also references to "Mr. Holland's Opus" and "Dangerous Minds," with a strong backwash of seventies funk. A standup comic, Harvey is closer to Pryor than to Cosby in his delivery, holding his blocky body still and giving his head a wicked side snap (as when he tells a student, "Why don't you just get out of here with your little saggy-pant'd trifling behind?"). But, like Cosby, Harvey works clean; this is one of the few sitcoms involving teen-agers that don't inflict constant tittering. Although "The Steve Harvey Show" hasn't got the promotional push or the production quality of "Cosby," it does tender one distinct advantage—it's actually funny. Harvey is a master of the mildly piqued. His battle-weariness after only one day of teaching comes from the soul. Unlike Cosby, Harvey occupies center stage on the show that bears his name without holding the rest of the cast (and us) hostage. ♦

SOCIAL NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[From the San Francisco Chronicle]

One of their most unusual events was a Halloween party for a hospital trauma unit: small black wooden coffins were used for decoration, and a dessert buffet featured a miniature guillotine.

Surprise someone you love with a flock of chickens, a pig, or even a bullock.

Here's a way to solve your what-to-give problem. Think of it as a good, better, bestiary way to show your love for someone special, and also help people grow more food.

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"Here's a bullock for your baptism...birthday...bar/bat mitzva." Cattle are essential for transport, plowing and food in Cambodia. *AFSC* set up the only animal vaccine lab there ($80 cost per 1000 doses) and trains and equips village vets ($165 each).

"Please accept this piglet for your wedding...anniversary dinner." A U.S.-sponsored preemptive strike against swine fever wiped out Haiti's pigs in 1983. Other breeds don't thrive there, so *AFSC* is reintroducing indigenous Creole pigs. A family receives a breeding pair ($100) and in turn gives a pair from the first litter to a neighbor.

"For you at Christmas: A flock of chickens instead of one lonely Partridge in a Pear Tree." The fowl (10 for $35) will go to the women's poultry co-ops in Mozambique. These enterprising ladies hope soon to buy a diesel-powered hatchery ($300).

If this sounds a little like a Quaker Noah's ark, you get the picture. With human survival at risk, *AFSC* fosters sustainable local economies. That's one of our gifts. Please help us by sending your best gift.

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

GIRL CRAZY

BY DAVID SEDARIS

Producers of the ABC sitcom "Ellen" are discussing plans to have the main character disclose that she is a lesbian. —*The Times*

Dear ABC:

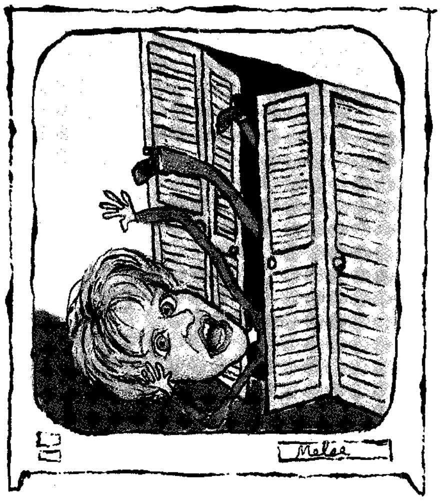
Why is it that Ellen can be a lesbian but a six-year-old boy from North Carolina can't kiss a little girl without being suspended for sexual harassment? According to you and Ellen, things would have been just fine had he kissed a *boy!* Just when I think I know what's going on in the world, you switch a show from one time slot to another and then change the characters into homosexuals so nobody can recognize them anymore. You're playing games with our minds and I, for one, don't like it. Mess with Regis and Kathie Lee, and you'll be picking your front teeth out from between my bloody knuckles!

BARB DIESEL
High Point, N.C.

Dear ABC:

Kudos for allowing Ellen to reflect the rich cultural diversity of the real America, a place where differences are celebrated and frank discussions of sexuality are as common as evening prayer. Don't be fooled or intimidated by the right wing's proposed boycotts. For every rabid fundamentalist, there are ten free-thinking progressives whose viewing habits cannot be altered by fear and hatred. I congratulate you for breaking new ground and feel certain your courageous decision will reward us all. One question, though: How soon after she comes out will Ellen start getting it on with other women? There must be all kinds of college-age girls ready to shed their sweaters and hop into the sack with the stacked and lovely Miss DeGeneres. Stick with the hot stuff and you've got yourself a loyal viewer.

DIMITRIUS SAPPHO
New York City



Dear ABC:

Stop the cameras, because I've got a little news flash for you: Not all lesbians own bookstores and drink coffee. As a practicing homosexual for the past eighteen years, I am sick to death of your stereotyping of gay and lesbian characters. There are hundreds of thousands of us out here who have never read a book, touched a cash register, or had a cup of coffee, either hot or iced. Caffeine makes me jumpy, and I prefer drinking Hawaiian Punch with just a whisper of vodka. Does that make me a freak? In your attempt to "package" Ellen, you hurt those of us who live outside the little cardboard boxes in which you confine your minority characters. Undoubtedly your network is run by Japanese who think they can squeeze out a few extra yen by stirring up a little controversy. Well, squeeze away, Emperor Mitsubishi. You ain't getting a dime out of me.

CHRISTINA MANLY
Baltimore, Md.

Dear ABC:

If you are going to turn anyone into a homosexual, I suggest you do it to Hugh Downs on "20/20." I am a heterosexual man and, as my wife can attest, have always been a devoted and responsible partner. I have a distinguished war record, three children, and five beautiful grandchildren who are the love of my life. Never have I strayed from my marriage or allowed myself to think sexually of any man other than— You guessed it! Hugh Downs is a fox, and I would love to watch him let loose and cuddle with a few of his guests. I don't know which would be higher—your ratings or *my* blood pressure. (Ha ha.) Seriously, though, if you truly do possess the power to turn people into homosexuals, I'll go to bed praying you have the good sense to choose Hugh Downs rather than some frumpy woman whose show I've never watched.

NAME WITHHELD UPON REQUEST
Santa Fe, N.M.

Dear ABC:

I have read that you are thinking of turning the television character Ellen into a homosexual and am wondering if you plan to make her a slutty lesbian or the type who stays at home and gardens. If you move in favor of the slut, allow me to suggest my former wife as a role model. Is that the right word? I mean that if Ellen wants to be a slutty lesbian you can base her character on my former wife—all she *does* is tell lies and slut around. On our wedding night, I shaved all the hair off my body, because she said it made her nervous. Then, when I was bleeding from razor nicks, guess who chose to sleep on the sofa? Now she's living the slutty high life and I have nothing. If I provide you with my ex-wife's name and address, will you pay me for it? Please have your lawyers contact me as soon as possible. If my mother answers, ask to speak to Timothy. DO NOT LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH MY MOTHER, as I don't want her knowing my business.

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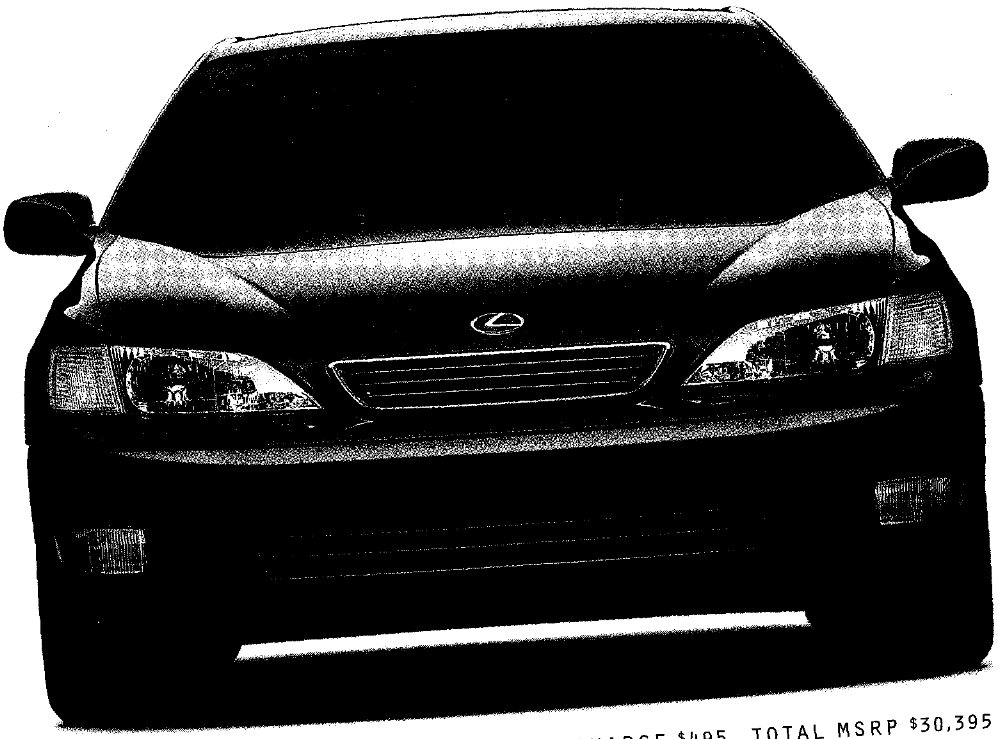

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